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Dedication

To Dayna and Deborah, who have supported me and this story since the beginning

Prologue

Four dragons sat in the darkness.

A dark teal SeaWing, barely seven years old. A small orange SkyWing, who held herself like a royal. A huge lemon-yellow and onyx-black HiveWing, with completely black eyes. And a hulking shape that towered over them all - a NightWing/IceWing, with silver teardrop scales next to each of his eyes.

Water lapped at their claws, however they didn't sink under its dark, cold surface. Instead they sat on it as though it was solid ground. The landscape around them was completely black - fog floated around through the void, obscuring anything more than a few wing-lengths away. However the fog parted around the four dragons, allowing their eyes to shine in the darkness; dark silver, bright yellow, completely black, and sapphire blue.

Suddenly the SeaWing spoke.

"This is ridiculous," she muttered, folding her pale green wings against her sides.

"Indeed," commented the SkyWing, turning the black, melted side of her face away from the others and curling her claws in with a soft growl, malicious yellow eyes glaring at the dragons around her. "Not nearly as *thrilling* as I hoped this would be."

"You all know we needed to decide on this together," the NightWing hybrid grumbled, his silver teardrop scales behind his eyes glittering like diamonds.

"Let's just get this over with," the HiveWing hissed, sliding stingers in and out of her claws. "We all know Orca would've just chosen her insane many-greats grandfather, and his twisted little animus from that insipid hybrid island." Wasp let out a growl as her movement caused the water beneath their talons to move again, sending

ripples cascading over the surrounding dragons' talons.

"And Darkstalker would've chosen his girlfriend," Scarlet yawned, stretching her enormous crimson wings. "Which is against the rules, as you all clearly stated. Our fifth member has to be *alive.* Preferably someone no one would suspect."

"Enough arguing," Orca said suddenly, flashing the royal patterns under her wings. "Queen Scarlet, Queen Wasp, King Darkstalker. Our guest has arrived."

"I still feel like Burn would've been fine. She's been dead for less than six years," Scarlet began, but Darkstalker splashed some water at her with his tail, and she instantly snapped her mouth shut, smoke starting to pour from her nose and twist around her horns.

"Ladies," a voice said, and a pair of onyx eyes appeared in the darkness. "Gentledragon," he quickly amended, glancing up at Darkstalker's gigantic form. Pale yellow scales came into view, striped with black diamonds that marched down the dragon's spine. A deadly tail was curled up safely behind the SandWing. "I am quite honored that you somehow chose me, of all dragons-" this was followed up with a small chuckle before continuing, "-to have the privilege of joining your esteemed council."

"Enough with the formalities," Wasp growled, but she allowed herself the smallest of smiles anyways - she hadn't been treated like royalty in a while, since technically she was surrounded by equals - another queen, a princess, a king. And now a prince.

"No one suspects you," Orca explained. "You aren't suspicious enough to attract too much attention to yourself. Even if Thorn doesn't exactly trust you."

"Thorn in your side, more like," Scarlet laughed at this pun, but quickly regained her composure.

"Anyways," Wasp continued, glaring at the SkyWing queen, "welcome to the council, Prince Smolder of the SandWings."

A/N: Hey, don't look at me like that!! You know fully well I

couldn't let all this perfectly good evil go to waste! Besides, I want Scarlet to die a much more painful, bloody, thrilling death than getting her neck snapped, and this way, we have a second chance to do just that!
As for Smolder, it's exactly as Orca said; "No one suspects you." I just feel like Smolder would make a really good villain, if treated properly. Please don't brutally murder me for this.
Onto my explanation for including Orca: I felt like, as a villain, she was really underrated. Think about it - had she won her duel to the death against Coral, that statue in the hatchery would still be killing the female dragonets!! Orca's plan was to pretend as though she had no idea why the eggs were being destroyed, act as though she was "utterly devastated", and she was totally unbothered by killing multiple innocent dragonets (as Hvitur said, harming a dragon egg is not something most dragons do, at the very least without feeling somewhat guilty afterwards)! Who, may I mention, were her *own family*.
...I'm sure you can guess why the rest of the bad ol' bois are here...
Anyways, without further ado - onto the story! I hope you enjoy,

- Gala

PART ONE

DREAMS AND DRAGONFLIES

Chapter One

Peacemaker sighed happily, stretching his glittering wings and lifting them to feel the currents of air.

Trees and leaves and so, so, much green flooded by in a rainforest rainbow of colors. The dragonet dove into the canopy again - it was nearly like plunging into water, but warmer and more beautiful and with less fear of drowning.

He spotted a branch and, uncomfortably, remembered earlier today in Jambu's tree gliding class how he'd been no better than any of the NightWings, who didn't have the "right type of tails" for swinging on branches.

Jambu had explained to Peacemaker that he didn't have to be perfect at everything, but secretly Peacemaker thought that wasn't true. The only other RainWing-NightWing he knew, four year-old Princess Firefly, was an amazing tree glider. Mastermind (who had made up for his past mistakes with how hard he worked and how eager to please he was) had said that "a prehensile tail were the prominent genes, in her case. Don't worry about it too much, Peacemaker." But Peacemaker worried about it anyways.

He veered to his right and up, curling his tail forwards in a position that would catch the branch. In one swift movement, he hit the branch, opened up his wings, neatly did a flip, and then didn't get his timing right and was sent crashing into the forest floor.

"Oww," the dragonet moaned, flopping his wings out on either side of him. "Might have misjudged that... a little bit... ow..."

He somehow managed to get himself onto his back, and stared up at the cascading colors of green and red and blue and orange and yellow and purple - basically the whole rainbow - around him.

"Peacemaker! Are you alright?" The five year-old NightWing hybrid

turned his head towards the sound of his friend's voice.

"Firefly," he said, smiling, then winced as he tried to sit up.

"What happened to you?" Firefly asked, a few whorls of displeased and worried greens shifting through her wings and ruff.

"Tree gliding practice," he laughed bitterly.

She folded and unfolded her neck frill for a few moments, colors Peacemaker either had never heard of or never seen very much of shifting through it, before finally saying; "You don't have to, you know. I know that you're not built for tree gliding, and that isn't your fault. Besides, I like you just the way you are - it doesn't matter that you can't hang from a tree like a stupid RainWing." She made a mock angry face and added a layer to her voice on that last bit, however Peacemaker didn't know which NightWing she was imitating.

"Some NightWings can tree glide," Peacemaker argued. "If they can do it, certainly I can. I mean, I'm more RainWing than they are."

Firefly made a thoughtful noise but didn't verbally reply.

"I actually didn't come looking for you to save you from tree gliding practice," she said finally, slowly beginning to spread her yellow-orange wings. "I found something *super-spooky*. And I was wondering whether you wanted to come see it with me or not."

"Sure," the other dragonet shrugged. "Hey, where's your dad? Does he know you're doing this?" Normally Princess Firefly was followed around by two NightWings and two RainWings at all times for protection. But today Peacemaker saw none of that - only a delighted little dragonet.

"Oh, yeah, he's going with mom to make more negotiations with Queen Snowfall, or something," she waved a claw dismissively. "Something about how much she's grown as a queen since the whole... you know... Pantala thing, and to see if we can finally get the light globes Glacier said we could have.

"But don't worry. I have, like, six RainWing guards following me

around all the time. Well, five. One went to go eat a banana. Dad doesn't trust the NightWings to do their job right when he's not around." A sigh whooshed out of her snout, and a few more colors rippled through her wings.

Unlike Peacemaker, who was mostly a rich, dark black with rainbow colored dots over his scales here and there, and who had trouble changing colors like the other RainWings, Firefly was royal purple and shimmering gold and sunset yellow and orange, her scales changing colors like the wind with a bucket of paint, just like the other full-blood RainWings of the village. The only hints that she was even a hybrid at all were the gold stripes on the underside of her wings, which at night - when her wings took a midnight blue tone - looked like a sky of beautiful, swirling stars, and the starry silver speckles all over her face and scales that looked like someone had upended a bunch of glitter onto her. And when Peacemaker had mainly more NightWing-like traits, with his fire (even if it was strange and green instead of the normal orange-red-gold color), Firefly had acid venom, which not only melted through things, it was also hot enough that if she spit some on if onto dry wood, the tinder would eventually start smoking, and then burst into flame. Peacemaker curled his tail around his talons, settling into a sitting position. He wished he had more powers than fire-breathing and growing strawberries, even if Firefly loved his strawberries. At least that made it a little better.

"So, what was it that you wanted to show me?" he asked.

"Oh, right!" she spread her wings in a rush, even though they were mostly extended already, and then grabbed his talons, hauling him into the air. There was a bit of fumbling as he struggled to right himself and unfold his wings, and by the time he got around to doing that, Princess Firefly was already tumbling through the jungle, dodging easily around tree trunks and large plants even though she was dragging Peacemaker along behind her, and he seemed to be getting hit in the face with every palm frond in the rainforest.

"Nearly there," she shouted, but Peacemaker was barely listening. He was focusing on pumping his wings as fast as he could, trying to dodge around obstacles and, surprisingly, only occasionally failing.

Suddenly they burst into a clearing. Firefly snapped open her wings, and Peacemaker slammed into a tree on the far side of the clearing before fully stopping.

"You okay?" the NightWing-RainWing princess asked, helping Peacemaker to his feet.

"Fine," he rubbed the back of his head, hoping he wasn't brain damaged.

Suddenly he felt... *something*... prickle in the back of his mind.

The dragonet whirled around, teeth flashing, only to find a large boulder. And the feeling of... of *power* coming off of it was obscene.

"What is that?" he said, pointing to it and finally grabbing Firefly's attention.

"I was going to ask you the same thing," she yelped, lashing her purple tail (which had become a shade of indigo that was nearly blue in the past few minutes) and taking a step towards it. "And that's not all." She kept opening and closing her wings, half extended, before tucking them back against her sides. Peacemaker noticed she did this whenever she was nervous, but he couldn't comfort her right now. Instead he followed her silently, eyes trained on the boulder.

They walked around the huge rock, to the side of it facing away from the pond in the center of the clearing.

There was a massive hole in the center of the boulder. Peacemaker let a bit of fire build up, and then blasted it into the hole.

"Th-that's impossible," he choked out, watching the green fire disappear down a long tunnel. "I-it's... it's like it's bigger on the inside, o-or something."

"I know!" Firefly spread her wings, letting orange ripple through them in violent waves. "It's super-creepy, like I said earlier..."

She continued rambling on and on about how she found it, saying something about fungi, and how they can mind-control ants - wait,

when did she start talking about that?

"And they can, like, mind control things! Like the breath of evil! So spooky! Anyways, I noticed that the mushrooms - not the scary mushrooms, just normal mushrooms - were growing kind of funny..."

Oh. So she just got sidetracked talking about mushrooms. Alright.

Peacemaker kept his eyes on the boulder, barely listening. He suddenly had a moment of revelation, and the dragonet spun around on his best friend.

"We should go in," he said.

A/N: Ha-ha, what have we here, a ship? Oh, come on. You all knew there'd be one of those eventually. I originally wanted to put a scene where Peacemaker and Firefly sat on top of a tree, watching the sun set, but I couldn't really find a way to fit that in here, so maybe later on in the story.
Also, whoo-hoo, do you guys have some exciting crap about to go down. Sorry that I update the Prologue, like, every two seconds - I need to make sure it's perfect before I can move onto the next chapter, and even then there's still going to be grammar and spelling mistakes that I don't catch.
Just so we're clear, I'm going to update this book *at least* once a month. If I'm motivated enough to do more, then we'll do more.
Without further ado, let us continue!

(wow that rhymed)

- Galaxy (and Wren, since it was her idea to send them into the hole)

Chapter Two

Firefly stared blankly at him.

"I-I mean..." Brown and green shimmered through Peacemaker's wings as he folded them against his sides. "I just thought that-" But he was cut off.

"That's a great idea!" Firefly said way too enthusiastically, gold and yellow spinning on a mad rampage through her scales. Without further thought, she grabbed Peacemaker (again) and dragged him right into the tunnel.

"AHHHH!" Peacemaker screamed. "I DIDN'T MEAN 'LET'S GO RIGHT IN'!! I MEANT AFTER WE MAKE A PLAAAAANNNNN!!"

But Firefly payed her screaming friend no notice. She beat her wings harder, and Peacemaker wrenched himself free of her grasp. As he dropped to the floor of the tunnel, he felt rock scraping against his talons. The black dragonet looked around.

It actually looked like a normal tunnel, for the most part. It was surprisingly warm - much hotter than the air had been a few moments ago. This was a dry, stifling heat, instead of the wet, almost groggy humidity of the rainforest.

"Wow!" Firefly said from up ahead. Apparently she'd barely noticed he wasn't holding on to her anymore.

Peacemaker beat his wings and took on a burst of speed, noting with the smallest amount of pleasure that this tunnel was much easier to fly through than a jungle full of trees.

Sun hit his scales, and the dragonet muffled a gasp as his friend and the end of the tunnel came into view. Sand stretched from there to the horizon on all sides, a cloudless blue sky full of sunlight

overhead.

"Peacemaker..." Firefly whispered, "we're in the Kingdom of Sand."

"This is... impossible," Peacemaker was pacing back and forth. They were back in the rainforest, surrounded by birds singing as though they were preforming for a huge auditorium full of dragons.

"Unless it's *animus magic,*" Firefly said with way too much awe in her voice to be healthy.

"Which animus?" Peacemaker ventured. "There's only been five..." *six*... "that were confirmed to be alive in the past 200 years. And this boulder-" He motioned to the huge rock, "-it's been put here recently. See?" He tapped the base of the massive, dark grey stone. "There's hardly any vegetation growing on it - a bit of moss near the bottom. This indicates that it can't be more than a few years old."

"You got all of that from some moss?" Firefly asked.

"Well, yeah," Peacemaker said. "You have to know something about plants when you're always growing strawberries."

"Now I'm hungry," Firefly let out a dramatic sigh.

"Firefly," Peacemaker shook his head, "I think an animus tunnel is more important than your lunch."

"I bet mom would know what it was," Firefly said suddenly. "We should write a letter and ask her about it!!"

Peacemaker shrugged. "I guess we should probably tell the queen about strange things in her kingdom, even if she *doesn't* know what they are."

"Whoa!" Firefly exclaimed, and Peacemaker spun around to look at her. The was staring up at another hole, this one in a massive tree. Immediately she was looking back at him, longing in her eyes.

"We're going in, right?" she asked politely. Peacemaker sighed. The other dragonet made a face at him, and then spread her wings,

lifting up into the tunnel. Peacemaker shivered as he entered the hole. It had the same wrongness as the other, and it was even hotter than the tunnel to the Kingdom of Sand. Suddenly a yell interrupted the still, smoky air.

"Ack! Scary dragon thing!"

Peacemaker bounded ahead, ready to fight whatever was attacking Firefly. But it was just a statue of hardened ash - a dead NightWing, killed by the volcano.

"Oh," Peacemaker realized, a few gears clicking into place in his head. "I know what these are."

"What?" Firefly tilted her head at him. "What the tunnels are?"

"Yeah," the NightWing-RainWing dragonet said. "These are the animus tunnels from the NightWing volcano, to the Rainforest, to the Kingdom of Sand. They were created by..." He trailed off. Why couldn't Peacemaker remember important animus history? "By one of the NightWing animus dragons. I forget his name."

"Stonemover!" the princess called out suddenly. "Stonemover, the old petrified dragon from Jade Mountain Academy! Sunny's dad."

"Right," Peacemaker acknowledged, as though he'd been meaning to say that all along. He grabbed Firefly's tail as she tried to fly ahead, most likely to check out the old NightWing island.

"It isn't safe for us to go there, if it really is the volcano," he warned. "It could still be active, and we really don't want to be caught in an eruption." His friend sighed, but followed him back into the rainforest anyways.

They emerged into sunlight, and Peacemaker silently thanked the moons that he'd never had to live on the volcano. Even just being in the tunnel made him feel close to suffocating.

"We could probably explore it later," he offered to Firefly's crestfallen expression. "But with an adult, someone who could make sure we don't, like, fall into lava or something." His ears pricked, tilting his head with a slightly confused expression.

"We should probably head back to the village, then," Firefly started, but Peacemaker wrapped his talons around her snout.

"Shh," he said. "I... think there's someone out there."

They sat in silence for a few moments, but nothing but the breeze and a few birds and the never ending chorus of crickets came from the rainforest.

"Must've just been a monkey," Firefly said, prying her friend's talons away.

Suddenly a dragon lunged out of the bushes.

A/N: AHH I WON'T KILL THEM YET I PROMISE!!!!
Anyways, we're finally going to get the plot moving next chapter, so that should be fun. And we'll get to meet more characters than just these two. *motions to Firefly and Peacemaker in disgust*
That's about it, actually. Remember to vote and comment (mainly comment, because anyone can just come in here, press vote without reading, and leave) and I'll see you next chapter!

- Gala

Chapter Three

"Peacemaker!" Firefly screamed, pale green taking over her scales. Peacemaker saw a flash of black scales come out of the greenery as the NightWing landed gracefully on the grass in front of them.

"Peacemaker," Hope scolded. "What are you doing all the way out here?" Her eyes drifted over Firefly for a few moments, something hidden in her expression. Sadness, maybe? Was she remembering Peacemaker's father, Boa? Supposedly he'd been killed by a fallen tree before Peacemaker had hatched - and Hope had loved him very much. But as suddenly as the emotion came, it was gone, and his mother continued. "With the princess, no less." She paused. "Firefly, aren't you supposed to stay in the RainWing village?"

"Yeah, but it's *so boring,*" the dragonet moaned. "And I saw Peacemaker crash into a tree, and I didn't want to leave him in the middle of the rainforest all on his own. Besides, I wanted to show him the funky tunnel thing." She flicked her tail at the massive boulder behind them, which still radiated such wrongness that it was nearly impossible not to notice it there.

"You didn't go in, did you?" Peacemaker's mother put on her usual worried expression, something Peacemaker was quite used to seeing whenever he went out on his own. *But I'm not on my own!* he thought. *I'm with Firefly!*

Firefly looked like she was thinking the same thing. "Yeah, of course we went in. It's a creepy hole in the middle of the jungle. What four-year-old and five-year-old dragonets in their right minds *wouldn't* want to explore?"

Hope sighed, spreading her obsidian wings. "Well, you've done enough running around for today. Back to the village, both of you." Peacemaker and Firefly followed her back through the trees, however the trip back to the NightWing village seemed much

longer than it had before.

Finally the three dragons fluttered down, their talons almost instantly squishing into the mud, even with the neat paths weaving between the houses. Peacemaker looked around at his tribemates - he spotted many of them walking around and flapping from place to place.

"Moonstar," Peacemaker spotted the black dragon almost instantly, from the line of dark silver scales along her back that no other NightWing he knew had. She was one of the few other NightWing RainWing hybrids in the village, however she was much older than Peacemaker. She jumped a little bit, as though she was startled.

"Oh, um, hi, Peacemaker," she said quickly, managing a smile.

"Hey, Moonstar," Peacemaker smiled back at her. "Don't worry about those strawberry pies - they were free, anyways." Moonstar smiled at the ground, however her long tail twitched violently, sending pebbles scattering in various directions.

"I-I'm still sorry about that," she said. "I just - they smelled really good and I almost never get to-"

"Hey, I said it's fine," Peacemaker turned the stars under his wings pink and yellow. "But next time, come and ask me for them, alright?"

"Alright," she said, before vanishing quickly into the crowd.

Hope smiled back at him, however something in her smile felt... off. Like the smile wasn't for him. Peacemaker shook it off as skipping breakfast. He was starving.

"I'm hungry," Firefly said with almost comedic timing.

"We can head back to my hut and eat something there," Peacemaker offered before his mother could decline. "Besides, baking pies is fun."

So the three dragons started back towards Peacemaker and Hope's hut. Made via Mightyclaws' magical drawings, it was one of the

older houses in the village. Peacemaker had so many good memories here, from making pies with his mom to joking around with Firefly and the other RainWing and NightWing dragonets in the village.

As they quietly walked inside, Peacemaker picked up a scroll that had fallen from the shelf.

The Legend of the Darkstalker was the title. The dragonet felt a shiver go through his wings as he slid it back into its place.

The Darkstalker, or just Darkstalker, was a powerful animus dragon that disappeared two thousand years ago, sent to sleep under a mountain by his former soulmate and best friend, Clearsight. If a dragon who was supposed to love him did that to him, he must've been evil.

About five years ago, Darkstalker broke free from his animus-touched sleep, and tried to take over Pyrrhia once more, casting a spell to make everyone like him and trust him. However once again he was defeated, this time by the dragonets of Jade Mountain. No one knows what happened to him after that, but many believed that the Jade Winglet found a way to kill him, or turn his magic on himself. Others argued that he'd disappear for another two thousand years, and then return once more for revenge. However Queen Glory and King Deathbringer, who actually knew exactly what happened to him, assured everyone that he was gone for good.

Not that it mattered right now.

"Pyrrhia to Peacemaker," Firefly said. Peacemaker blinked rapidly, trying to remember what he was doing. "You kind of zoned out there," his friend continued. "You alright?"

"Just really hungry," he managed, feeling dark purple and pink flush through his ruff.

"Okay," Firefly said, orange-purple zigzagging down her spine.

Soon the smell of freshly-baked pies filled the hut, and Peacemaker

was feeling normal-ish again. He thought about Moonstar as he ate a slice of pie, the delicious, warm, strawberry fruit juice squishing around his mouth and making his tongue feel tingly. He also thought about Moonwatcher, one of his best friends even though she was quite a few years older than him.

Moon was the first NightWing with the power to mind read and see glimpses of the future in generations, however more and more NightWings in the village were also starting to hatch with this power. Moon's best friend, Kinkajou, was another one of Peacemaker's friends. She was nine, the same age as Moon (both Moons, actually), and she was the first RainWing teacher at Jade Mountain Academy. Peacemaker wondered when the two dragonesses would come to visit him and Firefly again.

"Anyways, before she left, mom said something about Jade Mountain Academy to my dad," Firefly was saying as Peacemaker focused back on the conversation she was having with Hope. "I caught something about Peacemaker, but I'm not really sure. Isn't that exciting? Peacemaker, you might have been accepted into the Academy!"

Ah, yes. Jade Mountain Academy. A place where all ten tribes were allowed to learn, side-by-side, in harmony. Peacemaker had always wanted to attend, ever since Moon and Kinkajou became instructors there.

"Ooh, maybe we'll even be in the same Winglet!" Firefly squealed, pink and gold and yellow suddenly crashing through her dark indigo scales. Peacemaker shielded his eyes for a few moments as her colors slowly toned down.

"You're going too?" he asked finally, tilting his head at her.

"Ever since I heard you were going," she said, grinning at him with all of her teeth. "Besides, I heard this year they're going to bring in some famous scientists for special studies! I don't know what about, but it sounds really cool!"

Peacemaker remembered that, too. He remembered how he'd been grabbing every piece of information about Jade Mountain he could

get his claws on, until his mother finally caved and said she would ask to enroll him in the school. He'd had to take a few exams, but had never known if he was accepted or not. If what Firefly said was true, he'd be starting school in a week or two. Just the thought of that made little bubbles of happiness rise in Peacemaker's stomach, and that was something that didn't happen too often.

"I better be getting home now, though," Firefly said. "Or at least go take a nap, I shouldn't have skipped sun time this afternoon..." The dragonet continued to mumble quietly to herself as she hobbled out the door.

As the day went on and the sun began to dip beneath the horizon, Peacemaker started feeling a little bit tired. That was strange because normally he and his mother would stay up all night with the other NightWings. But today he'd gotten up really early (at sunrise) and flying through the jungle at high speeds for long periods of time could make even the most seasoned tree-glider a little tired.

"Mom," he yawned, "I think I'm going to go to bed a little early today."

"Okay," Hope replied, looking through their scroll rack. "Sleep well, moonbeam."

Peacemaker wanted to protest against the ridiculous nickname, but he was too exhausted. The dragonet padded over to his bed and curled into a black ball of scales.

Despite his exhaustion, he lay awake for a while, with his eyes closed, as he waited for sleep to come for him.

Peacemaker, a voice interrupted his thoughts.

What? Peacemaker drowsily lifted his head, looking around for who he expected to be his mother. "Mom, is it time to get up already?" he murmured sleepily.

Strawberries, the voice muttered, obviously angered but adding a small chuckle to the end, leaving the little black dragonet bemused

as he slowly regained his senses. ***The worst of all the fruits.***

Who is this? he wondered. He knew that some NightWings hatched under blood moons could telepathically communicate with non-mind readers, and there were a couple of them in the village. *Do you want a pie? I'm sorry if I haven't given you one yet. But I'm trying to sleep, can we do this in the morning?*

I am not one of your customers, the voice mused.

Then who are you? Peacemaker asked, louder this time. But there was no reply.

The NightWing hybrid snorted and lay his head back on his pillow, but he knew that sleep wouldn't be coming for him any time soon.

A/N: Hey! It's our first cameo, Moonstar! She belongs to @A_Pair_Of_Weirdos - thank you for the awesome character! I hope I wrote her right.
Also, spooky voice in Peacemaker's head, lmao I bet you already know who that is...
Also also!! STRAWBERRY PIE I'M HUNGRY NOW.
Also also also, this story is now on DeviantArt, because I want everyone in the universe to read it lol
See you next chapter, and keep being awesome!!

-Gala

Chapter Four

"Peacemaker, time to get up," Hope said gently.

The small dragonet slowly lifted his head, blinked, yawned, and sat up. He noticed there was a scroll on the table, which looked as though his mother had been reading it during the night. Peacemaker curiously stepped towards it to peer at the title. It was the same *The Legend of the Darkstalker* scroll from last night.

Peacemaker had some mango and starfruit for breakfast, and throughout the entire afternoon Hope continued to read the scroll, sighing to herself occasionally. Peacemaker wondered if he should ask about what was obviously weighing her wings down, but he thought better of it, not wanting to upset his mother more.

Instead the NightWing hybrid went for a walk around the village. He didn't have tree gliding practice today, and Firefly was off doing whatever Firefly did when no one was around, so he pretty much just had a day to himself to make pies and think about Jade Mountain.

"Oh, Shadow," Peacemaker gave a startled smile at one of his customers, blinking back into reality. Shadow was one of the more elusive members of the NightWing Village (which was saying something, seeing as it was the *NightWing Village*), and Peacemaker had never known her to be interested in his baked goods.

"Hey, Peacemaker," the blue-black dragon's voice was shallow as she spoke, and she fiddled with her ruby earring a bit. "Just need a small favor, nothing too major."

Hmm. That was a bit strange.

"Well... it depends. What do you need?"

"So, you know that scroll about animus dragons?" the NightWing

asked. "I was wondering if I could borrow it."

"Oh. Oh! Of course," Peacemaker laughed. "It might have strawberry juice stains on it, though, so don't freak out about that."

"I won't. Thanks." She gave him a genuine smile.

Peacemaker checked to make sure there wasn't anyone else waiting for pastries, then slipped out of the makeshift stand and disappeared into his hut.

The black dragonet grabbed *The History of Animus Dragons* and hurried back outside. Shadow thanked him again and disappeared into the pockets of darkness on the forest floor.

The rest of the day was without further excitement - the only other dragon Peacemaker gave pies to that day was Starfruit, one of the few RainWings who lived in the NightWing village.

He still wondered who could've been in his head last night, and eventually decided it was either one of the other NightWings at school messing with him, or it was a dream. Dreams were normal. Dreams didn't want to kill you.

But the dragonet had trouble sleeping for the second time in a row that night anyways.

A/N: I'm sorry this is kind of a slow chapter, four and five are kind of just supposed to be fillers and I *promise* it gets better from here. And don't worry, Chapter Five will be a little bit more thrilling.
I'm also sorry that this chapter took me so long to write, it's often the most boring parts that are the most difficult. Actually, I'm mostly just experimenting at the moment, and when I finish this story I'll probably go back and scoff at this chapter and maybe even edit it a bit.
On a brighter note, we have more cameos! Shadow belongs to my good friend irl, @SomeLumityStan, and Starfruit belongs to... *ah no I knew this would happen at some point* **Actually, I do not know O_O**
To the person who owns Starfruit, I'm so sorry ack, please

message me on Discord or wherever and I'll give you credit immediately!!

- Galaxy

Chapter Five

The ground under Peacemaker's talons squished loudly. The dragonet glanced down, startled to find that instead of the usual mud of the rainforest floor, he was standing in a vast expanse of squashed strawberries.

The pink mush looked like one of the smoothies Peacemaker would sometimes make for Firefly, but he decided against trying to eat it, even it did smell sweet and tangy.

The dragonet's head snapped up as his ears picked up the faint sound of laughter. That was certainly strange.

"Hello?" he asked. He began creeping towards the sound, each step sinking deeper into the strawberry juice. Suddenly he felt his talons slip into something wet and cool and smooth, and the dragonet suppressed a startled yelp. He looked at the strawberries again, wondering if he should turn back, but with a start realized that the vast expanse of pink and red had disappeared.

It was replaced by an endless void of black mist swirling over the surface of obsidian water, however the laughter remained. Now Peacemaker could even make out voices.

"How's it been with Auklet?"

Auklet? One of the SeaWing princesses? *Peacemaker wondered.*

"Same old nightmares. Not that I've made them any better."

"You seem disappointed about that. You do realize your entire existence is based off those nightmares."

"Yes, I know."

What was that supposed to mean? Peacemaker crept closer, willing his

scales to change to the dark hues of the background. It was much harder for him to camouflage the way the other RainWings did, but with this much darkness, even a normal NightWing would be nearly impossible to spot. Finally he came within viewing distance, and the dragonet gasped in shock.

He got a glimpse of dark, hibiscus-orange scales, black and yellow stripes, and dark green scales. He also thought that he could see a large, black shape on the far end of the circle of dragons, but its outline was blurry and it could've just been the fog.

Suddenly eyes the color of sapphires, bright yellow sunrises, and completely black were all turned in his direction, and that's when the hybrid dragonet was jolted out of his strange dream with a yell.

"PEACEMAK- oh, you're awake," the dragonet sitting on top of him amended. "FIREFLY! YOUR BOYFRIEND IS CONSCIOUS AGAIN!!"

"HE'S *NOT MY BOYFRIEND,*" Firefly roared back, stepping into the room. "Also, Peacemaker, are you okay? You were talking to yourself in your sleep about smoothies and fog. Must've been *some* dream. I had a dream about flying tigers once..."

Peacemaker blinked rapidly, looking up into the large, dark eyes of Prince Lightseeker, Firefly's younger brother. He and Peacemaker almost never talked - mainly because the grey-silver dragonet was barely two years old, and therefore not very conversation-worthy. Peacemaker wondered what he and his sister were doing in Hope's hut when it was barely even suntime yet, and most of the NightWings in the village were still fast asleep.

"Why are you guys here?" he asked without responding to Firefly's question. Instead he focused on Lightseeker's shifting grey-silver-white scales, with hints of opal black under the swirling monotones. If a dragon were to meet him on the streets of Possibility, they'd probably think he was some sort of IceWing hybrid - but there wasn't a scrap of blue blood in him at all, unless Glory or Deathbringer's families had been involved with IceWings at some point in the past, which Peacemaker doubted.

"Because..." Firefly wrung her talons, purple shimmering through

her wings. Guilt. What had she done now?

"It's a surprise," Lightseeker chirped obediently, jumping off of Peacemaker. The princess looked relieved as she glanced at her brother.

"Well, come on, then," she turned back on Peacemaker, brushing his wing with her's. "Let's go!"

"Wait, already?" Peacemaker moaned. "I haven't had breakfast-"

"You can have breakfast *after,*" his friend promised.

So three NightWing-RainWing hybrids - two royals, and one being dragged - scampered out of the hut. Hope didn't even bother to question what they were doing. Actually, she was still sleeping (somehow not woken up by the commotion) and was twitching slightly, obviously in a dream. Peacemaker wondered if he should go wake her up, but thought better of it as Lightseeker launched into the sky.

"Wait, where are we going again?" Peacemaker questioned, but Firefly just said "It's a surprise, you goof!" and that was the end of that conversation.

They flew for a while over the treetops, mainly because Lightseeker had complained that he didn't want to dodge branches the whole way there. Then Firefly slowed to a hover and dove into the overlapping green leaves. Lighseeker and Peacemaker followed her, emerging into the RainWing village. Peacemaker had only ever been here once, when Queen Glory and King Deathbringer had officially welcomed him into the kingdom. It was even more beautiful than he remembered it.

Dragons the colors of the rainbow and more were hurrying around, gathering fruits and writing reports and being trailed by large groups of students and laying in hammocks everywhere - there were even a few NightWings; one chatting with an orange-purple RainWing holding a sack and another hovering next to a sleeping platform, mot likely inspecting it and not liking what she found (judging by the obsidian dragon's sour expression).

But of course Firefly and Lightseeker barely stopped to check where they were going, and Peacemaker had to run to catch up with them again.

"Oh, hey Firefly!" a familiar bright pink-and-yellow face smiled down at the two dragonets. "And Lightseeker," Kinkajou nodded at the prince.

Her smile disappeared - just for a brief second - as she glanced up at Peacemaker. Orange and green flickered through her ruff, but neither of the royals seemed to notice.

"And Peacemaker," she amended, the kind smile returned to her face. "Here to see the queen?"

"Yuh-huh," Lightspeaker chirped. "Did Auklet come today?" *Princess Auklet,* Peacemaker thought. *Queen Coral's youngest dragonet, I think. One of the SeaWing princesses. Doesn't she normally live in the Kingdom of the Sea? Well, I guess it makes sense she'd visit the rainforest with Kinkajou sometimes since Kinkajou is friends with Turtle and Turtle's her older brother, and I* also *guess it makes sense that she'd be friends with Lightseeker even though she's - what, six now? And her aunt works for Glory. Wait, Glory? Wasn't the queen supposed to be negotiating with the IceWings?*

Tick tick tick, that's all your brain does. Not as bad as Qibli, but yeesh.

"What the-?"

But suddenly Peacemaker was being dragged into the Royal Pavilion by the elbow, and there was Queen Glory, sitting majestically across a beautiful throne adorned with flowers and a few tiny gemstones. There were no walls in this structure, only a roof that sheltered out the rain. Glory herself was wearing a crown of twisted copper wires, and the sight of it sent a brief flash of pain through Peacemaker's skull.

"Are you *sure* you're okay?" Firefly stuck her snout in his face, still gripping his elbow uncomfortably. "Because your face looks like the face of a dragon who isn't okay."

"I'm fine, Firefly," Peacemaker hissed, pulling his elbow out of her grasp. *Oops,* he realized. *That came out meaner than it was supposed to.* He looked back up at the queen, but he didn't have to look at his scales to know that they were pink and purple - embarrassment and guilt.

"Peacemaker," Queen Glory said, her tongue flicking out of her mouth. "Firefly has been absolutely ecstatic for nearly the entire morning - worse than Kinkajou used to be - so I think it'd be best if she told you."

Firefly inhaled, and instantly Peacemaker knew where this was going.

"Peacemaker," his friend said in a rush. "We're going to Jade Mountain and we're going to get to be in the same Winglet and it's going to be awesome andwe'llgettolearnaboutscavengersand THREE MOONS I'M SORRY I'M FREAKING OUT BUT *IT'S **AMAZING!!***"

There was a pause.

"You're back from your negotiations already?" were the only words Peacemaker could find, and he immediately wanted to step on his own tail for saying them.

"It went better than expected," Glory said, a light emerald green slipping through her wings. "Snowfall asked to be forgiven for her mistakes in the past few months, then basically threw a light globe at us."

Peacemaker nodded quietly. Finally what Firefly had announced hit him, and the dragonet gasped in delight.

"We're going to get to be clawmates?" he asked excitedly, yellow bursting through his wings.

"I know! It's so awesome!" Firefly squealed. "This is going to be the best year of our lives!!"

A/N: Thank you all so much for being so patient with Chapter Four, and to reward that patience I'm bringing you Chapter Five right now! Enjoy, my loyal followers, and I'll see you in

the next chapter!
Just a heads up, the next chapter will be the end of Part One - so exciting, I never actually thought I'd get this far!!

- Galaxy

Chapter Six

"Are you sure you need all of this?"

Hope was wearily eyeing the pile of school supplies Firefly had dragged in, her tail lashing across the floor.

"Yes, of course," Firefly chirped. "What if none of the other students brought inkwells?"

Peacemaker was pretty sure they had enough inkwells at Jade Mountain Academy, but he decided not to say anything. He and Firefly had been preparing for their departure to Jade Mountain for days, and he didn't want to squash the princess's enthusiasm now, when they were about to leave.

"Besides, we could still have forgotten something," Peacemaker said instead.

Hope sighed. "All right," she said finally. "Just be careful, moonbeam."

"Mom," Peacemaker sighed. "You realize I really don't like that name."

"I know," Hope looked at her talons. Suddenly she lifted her head. "You better get going."

Firefly didn't wait for Peacemaker. She grabbed a large sack of school supplies and flapped madly out the door. The other hybrid followed his friend, grabbing the other sack.

"I love you, mom," he said.

"I love you, too."

Outside, there was a small group of NightWing dragonets gathered around an older dragon Peacemaker recognized as - could it be?

"Moonwatcher!" he squealed like a newborn dragonet.

"Peacemaker!" she smiled at him. "I heard you got accepted into the Academy!"

"I know," Peacemaker ran into her wings, feeling the night sky wrap around him in a hug. "I was so excited - I mean, I still am, but-"

"Moon!" Firefly dropped her sack and also embraced the NightWing ambassador. Peacemaker tried not too look to sad as one of his best friends hugged one of his first. He knew that Moon and Firefly were close, seeing as Moonwatcher was Queen Glory's best diplomat with Pantala, but it still made him feel all wriggly and jealous inside whenever he saw them together, and then he wanted to step on his tail again for thinking that.

Among the dragonets he noticed Flashsight - one of Peacemaker's neutral friends. They weren't especially close, but sometimes they would hang out and talk about magic and queens together.

The dark lavender dragon was jumpy as ever, fiddling her talons and snapping open her wings before rapidly folding them back in again. Peacemaker could also see that Moon had brought a dragonet, Princex Hourglass, with her. They were a year younger than Peacemaker, however the SandWing held themself like a dragon of much older age.

Princex Hourglass is Thorn and Smolder's dragonet, right? So they'd be here because Qibli's basically their brother, so Moon is like their sister-in-law.

Hourglass didn't say anything as Moon settled down the other NightWings and launched into the sky. As they flew into the RainWing Village to wait for Kinkajou (with the RainWing students), Peacemaker sidled over to the royal. He'd only ever met this dragon twice, both times they came to visit with Moon.

"Hey," he said, glancing over at the adult dragons talking.

"Remember me? I'm Peacemaker."

"Of course I remember you," Hourglass replied. "Moon almost never stops talking about you. She-" The dragonet covered their mouth, catching themself mid-sentence. "I-I'm not supposed to talk about it, actually. Technically I'm not supposed to eavesdrop on Moon and Qibli at all." Hourglass glanced at the ground, tan wings dotted with dusty black specks dropping to their sides.

What would Qibli and Moon have to talk about me that I'm not supposed to know? Peacemaker wondered. *What have I done?*

More than you'd think.

That voice again.

Peacemaker whirled around, but there was no one there. He searched through the six other students for golden teardrop scales - dragons who could telepathically communicate with non-mind readers - but the small group of soon-to-be Jade Mountain students barely contained any normal mind readers, let alone the rare blood-moons.

Hourglass gave him a weird look for a moment, but Peacemaker could open his mouth to say anything, Kinkajou and the RainWing students were taking flight, followed quickly by the NightWings, and Peacemaker lost the SandWing in the sudden rush of wings.

"Peacemaker, hurry up!" There was a burst of orange from overhead as a dark purple dragonet barreled out of a group of annoyed orange wings. Firefly reached to grab her friend, but Peacemaker swerved out of the way.

"No, no, not doing that again," he said. "You've been dragging me all over the rainforest for the past few days. I can fly fine on my own, thank you very much."

Firefly laughed. "Okay, but you still have to hurry up."

Peacemaker sighed happily and flapped after his friend as she rose back into the sky. She was right, after all. Jade Mountain was a long way away. As the group of dragons flew, Peacemaker stole a glance

behind them. Queen Glory and King Deathbringer were waving at the NightWings and RainWings, both smiling. Prince Lightseeker was chewing on a mango and trying to look dignified at the same time beside them. Peacemaker smiled back.

Suddenly Peacemaker's sack slipped out of his talons. With a yelp, the dragonet dove after it, Firefly on his tail. He twisted around through the vines, but he only got the chance to grab it when the sack was caught on a branch.

"Whoa!" Firefly exclaimed. "That bag does *not* like you."

Peacemaker rolled his eyes, hauling the school supplies back up into the air. Firefly darted back to the rest of the group, and they were once again on their way.

The dragons flew for a while, until finally, around sunset, one of the students began complaining that his wings hurt, and Kinkajou and Moon dropped to the ground on the outskirts of the Rainforest Kingdom. The older dragons unraveled some sleeping mats designed for outside use, and soon enough the group was snoring peacefully.

A few dragonets were still awake, counting the stars or too excited to sleep. Peacemaker was one of them.

He kept thinking about how much his life would change once he reached Jade Mountain. The dark shape was already looming on the edge of the horizon - they'd be there in a day or two. He wondered what new friends he'd meet, what the other dragonets in his Winglet would be like, and most of all, what he would learn.

Jade Mountain Academy was a school, after all, so Peacemaker was guessing a lot. He wondered if Firefly was dreaming about her new life there, and then something in the back of his mind went *ping*.

Peacemaker sat up and looked over at the sack of school supplies. He had been relieved to see that he and Firefly weren't the only dragons flapping around the continent with bags full of inkwells, but right now he was only focused on his own.

Because it was glowing.

With cautious talons, the dragonet delicately opened the sack, which was glowing with a ghostly pale blue light. Inside was a star-shaped sapphire. A dreamvisitor.

There was a dreamvisitor inside of his sack of school supplies.

A/N: Ooh, a gift! Wonder who put it there? Lmao me of course who else has such a low sense of humor to toss a dreamvisitor into a sack of school supplies and then spend five minutes laughing about it
Also, ANOTHER cameo yeesh why so many-
Flashsight belongs to @ParadiseTheLeafWing, and don't worry, we'll be seeing quite a bit more of her later...
Just so you know, this is the last chapter of Part One, so I'm finally going to get to reveal this part's name, which, you know, is kind of cool.
I'm also going to pause this story until the end of November, because submissions for Jade Mountain students and teachers are still open until the thirtieth, and any slots in Winglets that aren't taken will be filled using my OCs (which I'm going to cry about because you're finally going to realize how many moonblasted characters I have but never use ;-;)
And finally, thank you for reading, my dear WoFles, and I'll see you in Part Two!! (ack so exciting)

- Gala

Important Announcement

Stalker of Dreams now has a Discord server! Please check it out in the link below, and tell me if the invite expires because sometimes they do that ☺

Chapter Seven

Jade Mountain loomed over the surrounding mountainside, its peaks swarming with dragons. From the angle Peacemaker and the others were approaching from, the mountain looked like a viper lunging towards the sky, fangs outstretched. The dragonet felt a shiver ripple through his wings.

"Three moons three moons three moons I'm so excited three moons three moons," Firefly was saying, little bursts of yellow splashing through her wings, doing little loops and spin in the air. Another flash of guilt hit Peacemaker.

I should've told Moon or Kinkajou or at least *Firefly about the dreamvisitor by now,* he thought. *I should've called out the moment I found it. Why am I keeping this a secret?* But the dragonet kept his mouth shut, talons gripping the sack as he tried to focus on the pumping of his wings.

"Peacemaker," Firefly said in a loud whisper. "I just realized something." Peacemaker nearly tumbled out of the sky, before he realized she wasn't talking about his secret animus-touched sapphire.

"What?" he asked, trying to make his voice as calm as he could and hoping that any panic spilling over into his voice would be mistaken for excitement (which at least wasn't him totally lying - after all, he was extremely excited to start school, and each wingbeat built up his anticipation).

"Why are there only five NightWing students?" Firefly asked. "Aren't

there supposed to be seven of them?"

"I don't know," Peacemaker confessed. "Maybe the missing students don't live in the rainforest? Don't Starflight and Fatespeaker have dragonets?"

"Oh, yeah, they do," Firefly replied, smiling. "I can't believe I forgot them. Pathfinder and Duskclaws. They seemed nice when they visited the rainforest last year." She seemed a bit happier now, with the Mystery of the Missing NightWings solved.

Moon and Kinkajou swooped down towards a spot where most of the plants had been cleared away, revealing a massive stone ledge. Peacemaker and the others followed, and there was a strange feeling of déjà-vu as the dragonet's talons scraped on the rock.

"Moon's back!" a voice called, and suddenly four black dragons came out of the cave opening nearby.

Two of them were Fatespeaker and Starflight, with the former carefully leading the latter with her tail, and the other two were dragonets.

"Hey guys!" Firefly waved at them. Peacemaker sighed, knowing that Firefly was the princess of the NightWings, or course she would be friends with all of her subjects, and Starflight and Fatespeaker's dragonets probably lived at Jade Mountain (where Moon worked) so of course they'd know the NightWing ambassador, too.

Duskclaws peered at Hourglass, who was standing next to Moonwatcher with an expression that was probably supposed to look formal. Peacemaker realized with a start that Fatespeaker's son had silver teardrop scales next to his eyes - a mind reader. As if on cue (actually, probably on cue), the dragonet's head whipped up and his green eyes focused on the NightWing hybrid. Peacemaker immediately began thinking about how excited he was for this year, and how interesting living with other tribes would be. He thought he heard a laugh as the mind reader went back to talking with Hourglass.

"C'mon, c'mon, let's go *inside,*" Firefly tugged on her friend's arm. "I

want to find out who our clawmates are, don't you?"

Fatespeaker, Starflight, Moon, and Kinkajou walked inside, talking about someone named Winter and Cricket and "special curriculum". Peacemaker wanted to follow them, but Firefly was pulling him in the opposite direction and the cave was dark enough that he lost them in the shadows.

"Where are we going?" he yelped, flapping his wings a bit frantically. Firefly let go of his arm but kept walking, so Peacemaker of course had to follow her. As his eyes adjusted to the light, he realized this cave was huge, big enough to fit over a hundred dragons comfortably. Dragonets of all colors scurried around, and the hall was filled with voices so Peacemaker could barely hear himself think. A large bronze gong was pushed up against the back wall, and three dragons in flight were carved into it.

Firefly stopped in front of a section of wall with stone tablets hung from it. They read;

JADE WINGLET

HiveWing: Buzz
IceWing: Polynya
LeafWing: Chestnut
MudWing: Amber
NightWing: Shadowsloth
RainWing: Sakura
SandWing: Coyote
SeaWing: Driftwood
SilkWing: Butterfly
SkyWing: Thunder

GOLD WINGLET

HiveWing: Apis
IceWing: Ferret
LeafWing: Bark
MudWing: Salamander
NightWing: Soulkeeper

RainWing: Charm
SandWing: Mountain Sands
SeaWing: Plover
SilkWing: Athyrium
SkyWing: Kaihalulu

SILVER WINGLET

HiveWing: Maxilla
IceWing: Shard
LeafWing: Oak
MudWing: Mahogany
NightWing: Smoke
RainWing: Clover
SandWing: Beetle
SeaWing: Auklet
SilkWing: Greta
SkyWing: Breeze

COPPER WINGLET

HiveWing: Charcoal
IceWing: Bleak
LeafWing: Cedar
MudWing: Slate
NightWing: Flashsight
RainWing: Amazon
SandWing: Cactus
SeaWing: Drizzle
SilkWing: Actia
SkyWing: Supernova

QUARTZ WINGLET

HiveWing: Bumblebee
IceWing: Glace
LeafWing: Cherry
MudWing: Bake
NightWing: Peacemaker
RainWing: Firefly
SandWing: Hourglass

SeaWing: Undertow
SilkWing: Mercurial
SkyWing: Cliff

AMBER WINGLET

HiveWing: Theory
IceWing: Basilisk
LeafWing: Vine
MudWing: Dirt
NightWing: Duskclaws
RainWing: Lichen
SandWing: Porcupine
SeaWing: Dolphin
SilkWing: Adonis
SkyWing: Cloud

OPAL WINGLET

HiveWing: Fons
IceWing: Wolf
LeafWing: Brugmansia
MudWing: Puddle
NightWing: Pathfinder
RainWing: Outrageous
SandWing: Poison
SeaWing: Jellyfish
SilkWing: Atticus
SkyWing: Wind

"That's a lot of students," Peacemaker observed, very wisely.

"Well, at least we know who our clawmates are," Firefly tapped the wall. "I feel like I know the name Undertow from somewhere."

"Yeah, aren't they Princess Tsunami's dragonet?" Peacemaker replied. "And Cliff - he's one of the SkyWing princes, I think. One of the only ones, actually, other than..."

"Vermillion," Firefly finished for him. "Wow, we're like a mystery-solving duo. I know some things and you know some things, and

together we know everything."

"I doubt that," Peacemaker laughed. "There's a lot we don't know."

"I know all the queens," Firefly replied. "Queen Jewel of the HiveWings, Queen Snowfall of the IceWings, Queen Hazel of the LeafWings, Queen Moorhen of the MudWings, Queen Glory of the NightWings and RainWings, Queen Thorn of the SandWings, Queen Coral of the SeaWings, Queen Io of the SilkWings, and Queen Ruby of the SkyWings."

"Glory doesn't count," Peacemaker brushed his wing against hers'. "She's your mom."

"So? She's still a queen," Firefly replied with a roll of her eyes. "C'mon, let's go find out where our Winglet is!" She spread her wings and soared over the dragons below, Peacemaker close on her tail. They landed in front of a large map that showed where all of the classes and caves and tunnels were and how to navigate them. Firefly took one look and it and immediately rushed off down one of the tunnels.

"Wait for me!" Peacemaker yelped. But the truth was, he was just as excited as her.

So lighten up a bit, Peacemaker. This* is *Jade Mountain Academy, after all.

The school of your dreams.

A/N: Thank you all *so much* for sticking with this ridiculous story for over a month and *seven whole chapters* wow! Thank you so much to all who participated in the cameo submissions, and as you can see all of that paid off (there will still be speaking roles for those who requested them, just later on in the book). Things are really going to start kicking into gear right about now, so I better go work on Chapter Eight... and prepare for Chapter Nine... and hope that Glace isn't totally hateable... and finish figuring out Mercurial and Cherry... and YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO STOP TALKING AND START WRITING ALLONS-Y

- Galaxy T. StarWing

Apology of Absence and Spoof

[image]

Hello, FanWings and WoFles!! I deeply apologize for my absence these past couple weeks. I've been having a bit of writer's block and for winter break I've been down south at my grandparent's house.

Without my computer.

I completely forgot to sign off or even say "yo but like lol I'ma be gone for a while see ya" so I understand that a lot of people seem to think that I'm dead. Anyways, I promised a spoof as well, so:

The Worst of Everyone
Starring: The Quartz Winglet!!

Bumblebee: *screaming "SNUDOO" at the top of her lungs for no reason*

Glace: *growling and hissing at everyone and generally being a jerk*

Cherry: *babbling random crap which may or may not have secret meanings and hints to your future*

Bake: *setting things on fire with Undertow whilst making high-quality pottery at the same time*

Peacemaker: *obsessively shoveling strawberries into his mouth*

Firefly: *jumping into mystery holes and getting herself killed*

Hourglass: *sitting in the corner quietly*

Undertow: *smashing things and screaming battle cries at the moon*

Mercurial: *wishing he could be as calm as Hourglass when in

reality he is*

Cliff: *loudly playing annoying music*

Random and Somewhat Terrifying Dragon: *dismembers insects with zen music playing in the background*

A/N because we always need an A/N: Thank you for not giving up on this story just yet! I know that none of you have actually met any of these beautiful demented little children yet, but I'm sure you'll soon learn to love all of them! Until next time,

- Gala

Chapter Eight

The Quartz Winglet, as it turned out, was not too hard to find.

It was at the end of a tunnel that was apparently called "Stalagmite Hallway". It wasn't hard to see why; massive columns of rock rose up from the floor like long teeth, and the differently colored lamps cast long shadows across the walls of the cave.

Peacemaker blinked for a few moments as his eyes adjusted to the much brighter surroundings than the Great Hall. He squinted at one of the lanterns and thought he could see a filament of glowing silk within it. Well, that certainly explained why it was so bright.

Firefly stopped for the briefest moment to stare at a bright yellow lamp, poke it so that it bobbed slightly, then quickly get back to hurrying along.

They dragonets finally came to a large cave with cushions and blankets strewn across the floor. A strangely-colored LeafWing sat on a sky blue pillow, her nose in a book. A massive scroll rack took up the entire wall behind her, and the wood was carved with beautiful patterns. She looked up as they came in, and Peacemaker felt a shiver ripple through his wings.

"Stripes?" she asked quietly, setting down the book. Her scales were strangely off-white, speckled with pale pink. And her wings were the color of birch leaves buried in snow. She very well could've been half-IceWing, despite the fact that she seemed to hold herself like a LeafWing and didn't have any ice dragon-like traits.

"Um-" Peacemaker started, but Firefly jumped in ahead of him.

"Are you our clawmate?" she asked. "You're a LeafWing, so... Cherry, right? Are you half-IceWing? Your scales are *so pretty*. You might be the prettiest dragon in Pyrrhia, actually. I'm Firefly, this over here is my friend Peacemaker."

Cherry blinked wide eyes at Firefly, tilting her head slightly. "The princess of stars," she said. "Yes, they call me Cherry."

"OOoooooooh," Firefly grinned maniacally at Peacemaker. "I'm 'the princess of stars'! Pretty cool. Do him next!" She shoved Peacemaker in front of her and he let out a startled yelp.

The LeafWing took a step backwards, then shook her head.

"Too early to tell you. I won't let the roses fall again."

Peacemaker wasn't sure whether to be relieved or terrified. What was that supposed to mean?

"Do you know when the rest of our Winglet is getting here?" Firefly questioned.

Before the bizarre LeafWing could respond, Hourglass strode into the cave. They folded their wings down against their sides and smiled at the three dragonets already there.

"Hello," the SandWing princex nodded at Cherry. They looked over at Peacemaker and Firefly. "We flew in together. I'm not surprised to see that you two ended up in the same Winglet."

"I know," Firefly grinned. "It's awesome, isn't it?"

Hourglass allowed themself the smallest of smiles, and Peacemaker wondered if they were the one who requested for him and Firefly to be put into the same Winglet. It made sense, as three of their siblings did work at Jade Mountain.

"Have you seen any of the others?" Firefly asked them, craning her neck to see if anyone was arriving behind the dragonet.

"I saw a SeaWing who was looking pretty intently at the Quartz listings," Hourglass replied. "Could've been Undertow. I didn't really stop to ask."

Firefly sighed dramatically and flopped onto one of the cushions. Cherry stifled a laugh before poking her nose back into the book she held in her talons.

Peacemaker watched as Hourglass selected a scroll from the rack (seemingly at random) and slid onto a mat to read it. The SandWing sighed in contempt and spread out their wings in a comfortable position.

A bit awkwardly, he stepped around Firefly (still draped over her cushion in a very dramatic, princesslike fashion that really didn't suit her at all) and over to the scroll rack. At the end of the bottom shelf, there was a small, worn, dark blue book. Curiously, Peacemaker picked it up. There was a note on the front.

Enjoy this!

Peacemaker glanced around, wondering if this book had been placed here by the founders of the school for him, or for someone else in his Winglet. Curiosity eventually won out over worry, however, and he flipped the book open, plopping down on a russet-colored pillow.

Publisher's Note:
This book was a treasure to copy. Although the original is still safe in Pantala, as it should be, I've always wanted dragons to know the truth. And this book is a big part of that. As you can see, the visions ended a long, long time ago. Over a thousand years ago, actually. But this is not about the visions. It's about the message - to all of the dragons of the new world.
The Book of Clearsight was written over two thousand years ago, by a NightWing seer (see Famous NightWings, A History of NightWing Seers*, or* The Tale of Clearsight *for more information).*

Peacemaker blinked, startled. This was one of the copies of the Book? It couldn't have been meant for him; he wasn't Pantalan and wasn't at all interested in Clearsight (sure, she was an interesting history subject and brilliant dragon overall, but Peacemaker was far more interested in horticulture). The dragonet stuck the note back to the cover and slid the Book back into its place on the shelf just as a crowd of new dragons burst into the quiet room.

Firefly abandoned her pillow and leapt to her feet, eyes sparkling with excitement.

The two dragons to first walk in were sky-blue and dark orange. Undertow and Bake, if Peacemaker had read the list correctly. Bake had large brown wings, with a broad, flat snout and MudWing-like build. His eyes were bright yellow, like sunshine and lemons. He was very clearly the son of Clay and Peril, two of the dragons who helped run the school. Undertow had glowing royal patterns under their navy blue wings, and dark turquoise eyes. The two dragonets joked loudly with each other as they walked over to greet Firefly.

The next dragonet was an IceWing, and she instantly pinned Peacemaker to the wall with her glare. Peacemaker didn't get to see who else came in behind her, because suddenly he was backed up against a wall with freezing cold scales blocking all of his escape routes. The RainWing-NightWing let out a yelp of fear.

The IceWing hissed, her eyes narrowing, and then she abruptly whirled around and disappeared into the cave on the left, leaving the rest of the Winglet peering curiously at Peacemaker.

"She does *not* like you," observed a new dragon, a silver-grey SilkWing (who almost looked like he was made of liquid metal) with pale yellow and blue stripes through his wings. He sighed and stepped towards Peacemaker. "The name's Mercurial. The terrifying IceWing was Glace. I guess she doesn't like NightWings very much." He held out a talon.

Peacemaker took a shuddering breath and let the SilkWing help him to his feet. He sat neatly on a cushion and curled his tail over his feet, trying to calm down from his near life-or-death experience. *I wonder if I should report her behavior to the teachers,* he thought, trying to get his mind back on course. *I wonder if they'd give me a pat on the head and a strawberry and then put her in a different Winglet so she stopped trying to kill me.*

He shook his head to clear his thoughts and sat up, almost immediately running into a HiveWing and being knocked down again.

"Ah! Sorry!" Peacemaker fluttered his wings in slight bemusement, blinking rapidly.

The black-and-yellow HiveWing just rubbed the back of her neck, smiling sheepishly. "Hi. I'm Bumblebee."

"Peacemaker," said the RainWing-NightWing dragonet, getting up.

"*Wow,*" Firefly dizzily stumbled over, her eyes sparkling. "Aren't you Cricket's daughter?"

"Yeah. You're Princess Firefly, right?"

"Yup! That's me. It's so nice to meet you. I'm excited to have someone who's *almost* as awesome as I am around, other than him." She flicked her tail with mock dismissiveness at Peacemaker, and all three of them stifled their laughs.

"It's an honor to meet you, too," Bumblebee replied. "It's kind of cool to be in a Winglet with royalty."

Something betrayed the HiveWing dragonet in her expression, and Peacemaker realized that wasn't the only reason she was nervous. Professor Cricket's daughter, Firefly said. Hadn't she and Bumblebee been on the run from Queen Wasp? Did Bumblebee know something he didn't?

Doesn't everyone know something you don't?

Peacemaker shivered.

"Anyways, it's great to be here," Bumblebee quickly got back to talking. "Since my parents, like, live here, or at least spend a lot of time here, I know this place pretty well. There's two rooms for sleeping, one on the right and one on the left. One's *technically* for girls and the other's for boys, but things are pretty lax and you can pretty much just sleep wherever you want." She flicked her tail at the doorways on either side of the cave.

"Cool," said Firefly. Her eyes were still doing their this-is-totally-awesome sparkle.

"I guess, since we're probably sharing a room with Glace," Bumblebee sighed.

"Ooh!" Firefly suddenly leapt up. "We should go check out the library. I heard it's bigger than it was last year because there was a cave-in, so they cleared away the rock and made more room for stuff!"

Peacemaker tucked his wings closer to his sides. He'd heard about the cave-in that happened last year at the school. No one had been hurt - no one even knew what was happening when they first heard the deafening *crash*, but the RainWing-NightWing hybrid still worried the ceiling might collapse on top of him and trap him for the rest of eternity.

Which was silly, he knew; if there was a cave-in and he somehow survived, he'd get dug out eventually. Right?

Either way, it didn't matter. Peacemaker sighed and followed his friends.

If the most you're worried about is a cave-in, Peacemaker, the voice said calmly, causing the dragonet to jump, ***you should turn around and go back home right now.***

Peacemaker desperately looked around for someone playing a trick on him, but there was no one other than himself, Bumblebee, and Firefly.

If the voice isn't someone from the rainforest...

Who is in my head?

A/N: AaaaaAAAAAHHHHHH I'M SO SORRY THIS TOOK SO LONG TO PUBLISH
I was having a little trouble introducing all of the characters properly while also ending the chapter on a "hmmmm..."-type note thing, so it took a lot longer than it was supposed to. Anyways, thank you for still not giving up on this story, and I'll see you in Chapter Nine!

- Galaxy T. StarWing

Chapter Nine

The scrolls did *not* do the Jade Mountain Library justice.

Peacemaker was sort of expecting a large room, filled to the brim with books. But instead the library was more like a long hallway, with a cushion or reading nook every few steps. Along one wall was an impossible amount of scrolls and books and stories and information that Peacemaker knew he would never be able to read in his lifetime. The other wall was lined with windows and smaller shelves, which looked like reading material for younger dragonets. Each window had a leaf placed over it, and each leaf was partially translucent, so Peacemaker could see the mountains and clouds outside if he looked closely at the windows and squinted. Green light poured in, and for the first time since Peacemaker arrived at Jade Mountain Academy, he felt homesickness pour over him.

"Look, *look!*" Firefly hopped up and down in some bizarre dance, pointing and waving wildly at two NightWings sitting a few tail-lengths away.

Immediately inside the library, there was a long stone slab that operated as a table along the right wall. Behind it where a few racks of scrolls, and each had a symbol printed onto them, one for every student at Jade Mountain Academy.

Two NightWings sat behind the desk; the blind librarian, Starflight, and his mate and assistant, Fatespeaker.

"Firefly?" Starflight asked, lifting his head up.

"And Bumblebee and Peacemaker," Bumblebee piped up. A warm smile spread across Starflight's face.

"I see you're taking your clawmates on a tour, then," the blind NightWing said as Fatespeaker turned around the scan the scroll rack.

"That's right!" Bumblebee beamed. "Is Cricket in?"

"She's talking with Winter about the... special curriculum for this year," Starflight grinned, and Peacemaker assumed he was winking under the bandage over his eyes.

"Oh. Alright," Bumblebee nodded knowingly.

"Here you three are," Fatespeaker said, placing three scrolls on the table. She rifled through the desk for a moment before pulling out three stamps, which matched the symbols on their respective scrolls.

A bumblebee, a firefly, and... a strawberry. Peacemaker smiled, taking his stamp from Fatespeaker as she handed it to him.

"Waaaay cool," Firefly said, holding the stamp out into the light to study it better.

"These are awesome," Peacemaker said, still smiling.

"They're to keep track of when you're taking out books or scrolls," Starflight explained, holding out a talon. Peacemaker dropped his stamp into it. "It seems to work pretty well, so we've kept the system." He demonstrated by dipping the stamp in some ink and pressing it on Peacemaker's scroll. He then handed the stamp back to the dragonet.

"C'mon, let's go check out the rest of the library!" Firefly darted ahead, her wings lighting up with cascading shades of eyehurting pink and yellow and orange.

Peacemaker turned to follow her, and accidentally tripped, coiling his tail with Bumblebee's.

"Oops, sorry," he yelped, pulling back.

"I-it's fine," Bumblebee stammered, recoiling slightly as well. Fatespeaker shot Starflight a look, before face-palming as she remembered that he couldn't see.

"Hurry up, you two!" Firefly yelled from ahead of them. Peacemaker

quickly hurried towards her voice, trying to keep the pink embarrassment out of his scales.

A few moments later, they were snout-deep in scrolls.

"Look! It's all about strawberries!" Firefly pointed at the aforementioned scroll, which Peacemaker pulled out. *Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know About Strawberries: The History, the Plant, and How to Grow It.*

"Nice," Peacemaker grinned, tucking the scroll under his wing. He glanced over to see what Bumblebee was looking at - a surprisingly bloody-looking story that appeared to be about the Tree Wars on Pantala.

He suddenly felt a cold chill over his scales and turned around, fearing that Glace had shown up for round two. But it was only Cricket, chatting happily with two other dragons - an IceWing and a SkyWing.

"So, I was thinking that you could introduce them to Wren and Ivy, and then they could help teach the lesson," Professor Cricket was saying, looking at the pale orange SkyWing.

"What about fireworks?" the SkyWing asked. "Peril could light them-"

"Your sister and fireworks *do not mix,*" the IceWing shivered. "Actually, your sister and anything even slightly flammable don't mix, but that's a conversation for later." He sighed.

Bumblebee's ears perked up and her head whipped around.

"Mommy! Sky! Winter!" she cried, running over to them.

"Heeey, little bug," Cricket beamed at her daughter. "You showing your clawmates around the school?"

"Yes," Bumblebee said. "Mommy, meet Peacemaker and Firefly."

Firefly smiled a wide smile, holding out a talon to shake.

"Nice to see you again, Professor," she said in her fancy voice, her smile replaced by a comically accurate imitation of Queen Glory's no-funny-business face. She nodded at Winter and Sky as well, then burst into laughter.

"Nice to meet you, Peacemaker," Sky said, smiling lightly at the dragonet who lingered in the background.

There was an awkward moment of silence as Peacemaker wondered what to say.

"What were you talking about? Aren't Wren and Ivy scav- humans?" Peacemaker quickly corrected himself. His eyes lit up. "Is that the special curriculum?" Both Sky and Winter lived in Sanctuary, one of the few cities where humans and dragons worked together in relative harmony. If they had come all the way to Jade Mountain Academy, something had to be happening.

"That's a secret," Winter replied, smiling as well. However as he did so, something happened to his eyes. They darkened, almost glaring at Peacemaker behind the smile.

Peacemaker was suddenly struck with a memory that wasn't his.

Winter, younger - angrier - glittering like death and ice and malice and frozen to the core.

His claws slid across the floor, just enough for them to be noticeable by the dragons around him, razor sharp and perfect killing machines.

"I could freeze you one part at a time," he snarled, dark eyes narrowing. "First, your horns, then snap them off. Then your tail - freeze it and snap it off. Then your claws, and your wings..." cold fire burned in his eyes, "...should I go on?"

"Hey, are you alright?" Peacemaker was startled out of his state by a voice. Winter's voice, in fact.

Peacemaker almost screamed, but instead clamped his mouth shut even though his heart was racing. He stared into Winter's eyes - no longer angry, or even hiding secrets, just worried about this little dragonet. Peacemaker nodded, not making a sound. Winter still

looked troubled, but he nodded as well and turned back to look at Sky and Professor Cricket.

"We should probably get going. Come *on,* Peacemaker," Firefly said, grabbing her friend's arm and dragged him from the library.

"What about my scroll?" he begged. "I didn't check it out!"

"We can do that later," Firefly argued. "I want to see the rest of the Academy." She pulled him up against a wall and Bumblebee yelped and ran over. "And you were acting like a flabbergasted dragontrap back there," the RainWing-NightWing added in a loud whisper.

Peacemaker was not aware that he had been acting like a flabbergasted dragontrap. "Was I?" he asked.

"Yes!" both Bumblebee and Firefly said in unison.

"You totally spaced out, and your mouth was even opening and closing a little bit," Firefly explained as Bumblebee did a worrying impression behind her.

What was *that?* Peacemaker wondered. *Winter is a nice dragon - he's the founder of a town, a friend of Professor Cricket's and a trusted voice in the dragon community. I've never even met him face-to face before - so what was I seeing?*

"Either way," Bumblebee shook herself off, "I guess we can go check out the underground lake next, if you want."

"Sounds great," Peacemaker replied, hating how shaky his voice felt.

"Are you sure you're all right?" Firefly questioned, taking her friend's talons in hers'.

"Y-yes, I'm fine," Peacemaker gently pulled away. "I think cooling off at the underground lake seems like a great idea. Lead the way, Bumblebee." He smiled up at the HiveWing dragonet, and she nodded eagerly before bounding off down the hallway.

"This is the Drapery Tunnel," Bumblebee explained as they walked

through the bustling hallway. Dragonets from every tribe were standing around here, chatting and making guesses about the special curriculum and mentioning interesting landmarks they'd found in around the Mountain. Glowing fungi and glowworms lit the tunnel as they walked further, and it began to narrow as the din of voices behind the dragonets faded into background noise.

Suddenly the tunnel opened up into a massive cave, even bigger than the Great Hall. The voices of the few dragons that were here (Peacemaker didn't recognize any of them) echoed around the great space, and the ceiling of the cave was missing, leaving it open to the nearly-cloudless sky overhead.

"Whoa," Peacemaker and Firefly breathed. Bumblebee grinned, then her eyes lit up and she darted over to another HiveWing dragonet. He looked up at her with a smile, and Peacemaker felt an odd twinge of jealousy.

"Theory!" she cried, embracing the black-and-yellow dragonet in a hug.

"Bumblebee," the other HiveWing smiled, adjusting his glasses. "How have you been? I was so excited when Honeydew said she'd let me attend - even Vapor thought it was a good idea! Isn't that awesome?"

"*Even* Vapor? Really?"

"Mhm."

"Um, hello," Firefly said. "Theory is a really cool name. Are you half-NightWing?"

"Oh, uhh, no," Theory replied, adjusting his glasses again. "But I was named by a RainWing who didn't know any better. It's a long story, actually. I don't remember any of it, of course." He laughed. "You must be Princess Firefly." He did a bow and the RainWing-NightWing giggled. Peacemaker forced the fiery red and orange out of his ruff and stepped forward, holding out a talon and doing his best to smile.

"I'm Peacemaker," he said through his teeth.

You don't like this dragon. Interesting. Be careful who your enemies are, Peacemaker. This dragon is more dangerous that you know.

"Theory," the HiveWing replied, "but, ah, you already know that. Nice to meet you all. May I introduce you to a few friends of mine?"

"Sure thing," Bumblebee replied.

"Hey, Theory," said an older SkyWing, who seemed about six years old. He had orange, hibiscus-colored scales and large crimson wings, and his eyes were a deep, fiery scarlet. "Hey, Bumblebee."

"How many dragons do you *know?*" Firefly loudly whispered to her clawmate.

"Theory and Cloud grew up in Possibility together," Bumblebee replied, waving a wing at the SkyWing. "One day Cricket and I visited and we've been friends ever since."

It seemed to Peacemaker that Bumblebee was leaving something out, but that was probably just his bizarre jealousy of Theory speaking.

Cloud waved at him, smiling slightly.

"This is Basilisk," Theory added, motioning to an IceWing. Peacemaker gasped. The dragon's scales looked like melted metal. They were a silver that hurt his eyes when they caught on the sun right, and they rippled when he moved so that it almost looked like he didn't have a solid form. "Basilisk, this is Peacemaker, Firefly, and Bumblebee."

"Nice to meet you all," Basilisk said.

"Your clawmates are *so cool,*" Bumblebee said jealously, leaning against Theory's side.

"Hey, you get to be in the same Winglet as the princess of two

tribes," the other HiveWing argued. "If that's not cool, I don't know what is."

"Oh, hello," said a new voice. Peacemaker turned to see a SandWing with black diamond patterns traced across her sandy-gold scales. "Theory, you never mentioned we had the princess of the NightWings and the RainWings in our Winglet." Her obsidian-black eyes were playful as they caught on the light of the glowworms above.

"She's in the Quartz Winglet, actually," Cloud said.

"This is Porcupine!" Theory said, his wings buzzing. "Porcupine, meet Bumblebee, Firefly, and Peacemaker."

"Nice to meet all three of you," Porcupine hummed. "Theory has told me a lot about you," she said, flicking her deadly tail at Bumblebee.

Why do I have a bad feeling about this dragonet? the voice wondered, and for once, Peacemaker agreed with it.

"You look like Blister," Firefly said suspiciously. Porcupine let out a laugh that sounded dangerously like vipers hissing.

"That's what everyone said about King Smolder, and look where that got him," she replied. "Don't worry, I'm not *nearly* as terrifying as she was. And I'm not dead, either, so that's a plus."

"I'd introduce you to the *whole* Winglet," Theory turned to look at Bumblebee, "but I don't actually know where any of our other clawmates are. I thought Dolphin would be at the underground lake, but she isn't here."

"Duskclaws is around here somewhere," Peacemaker offered. "I saw him with his parents earlier."

"That's good to know," Theory replied. "Maybe he'll be in the library..."

"It was nice seeing you guys again," Bumblebee said, "but I just realized we haven't met the SkyWing in our Winglet yet."

"Cliff," Peacemaker said, remembering the dragon's name from the Winglet listings. "Actually, come to think of it, why is there so much royalty in the Quartz Winglet?"

"He seemed pretty nice," Porcupine offered. "I saw a SkyWing looking at the Winglet listings when I came in. He grinned at me and asked if I knew the way to the band room."

"Sounds fun!" Firefly piped.

"Alright, then," Bumblebee waved one last time at the dragons from the Amber Winglet. "I guess we're going to find Cliff next."

A/N: Haha I love introducing characters we're never going to see again - or will we? Who knows? Either way, Basilisk belongs to dragonner, and I can promise you that we'll be seeing him again someday. The rest of these characters are mine, and originally they were going to be fillers until I decided, *Hey, these OCs actually have backstories that kind of correspond with the story, let's get the readers attached to them and then never show them again!* Except for Theory. We'll be seeing him again later as well.
Other than that, I'd like to once again thank you for sticking with this story, and I'll see you in the next chapter!

- Gala

Chapter Ten

Peacemaker sighed.

Barely his first day, and already he was getting dragged around like a sack of strawberries.

Firefly and Bumblebee had gotten sidetracked on their search for Cliff, so they'd wound up in the Prey Center (which was utterly awful, way too loud for Peacemaker and the exact opposite of the serene library), and then they'd gone off to look for Cliff some more.

"What do SkyWings like?" Firefly asked. Peacemaker shrugged helpfully.

"The sky? Porcupine mentioned he was looking for the band room-"

"Arghhh," Bumblebee groaned, rubbing her temples. "Why don't we just *ask* a *SkyWing?*"

"You mean Peril?" Peacemaker asked, "or one of the other students?"

"I dunno! Anyone!"

"I'd feel kind of awkward going up to someone and asking what SkyWings li-"

"Hi," Firefly said, stepping in front of a SkyWing dragonet. "My name's Firefly. What's your's?"

The dragonet blinked at her. "Kaihalulu," she shrugged.

"Ooh, that's a really cool name," Firefly widened her eyes. "What do SkyWings like?"

"...I like ice cream," Kaihalulu replied after a while, giving Firefly a slightly puzzled look. "I also know a few dragons who like cloud watching. And setting fires. And... flying?"

"HAH!" Peacemaker announced. "I was *right* about the sky!"

A HiveWing and an IceWing - who seemed to have been arguing a few moments ago - stopped to give the quadruple of dragonets a combined weird glance before walking away.

"Uh, sorry, um," Kaihalulu shifted her wings a bit. "I should... *probably* get back to the rest of my Winglet." She turned around and disappeared down the hallway.

"Way to go, scaring her off like that," Bumblebee said, even though there was a hint of playfulness in her tone.

"*Me?*" Peacemaker yelped, looking hurt. "It was you who were intimidating her! Princess Firefly of the NightWings and RainWings, and the daughter of Professor Cricket! You randomly walked up to her and asked what SkyWings like!"

"Bah," Firefly dismissed this with a flick of her tail. "It was totally you, being way louder and terrifying than you think you are."

Terrifying?

"Yeah, whatever," Peacemaker grinned, whacking his friend over the head with his wing and trying not to be bothered by her choice of words. He suddenly felt a tingling sensation down his spine.

I believe you've found your clawmate.

Peacemaker turned around, coming face-to-face with a dark red SkyWing. His orange wings were partially spread out, gold eyes wide.

"Oh, um, hello," he said, smiling. "Peacemaker, right?"

Peacemaker blinked, a little startled. Firefly jumped in for him.

"Yep! And I'm Firefly, nice to meet you! This here's Bumblebee." The

HiveWing grinned and waved. "We were actually looking for you."

"That's what I figured," Cliff nodded thoughtfully. "I wanted to scope out the school's layout before actually meeting anyone, I figured it'd be a bit easier to help other dragons out."

"Have you met anyone else from our Winglet yet?" Peacemaker asked.

"Just Undertow, but only because they visited the Sky Palace with the rest of the SeaWing royals a while back. So... technically no, I think. I was just on my way to the Quartz dorms, though. C'mon!" He swatted Peacemaker playfully with his wing and bounded off down the corridor.

"Wait for me!" Bumblebee yelped, sprinting after her clawmate.

Peacemaker followed, trying not to get sucked into the pit of his thoughts. It was starting to get late.

Peacemaker rolled over in his leaf pile, trying to breath as quietly as possible.

Everyone else was asleep - Undertow and Bake were entangled on a large reed mat that took up about one-sixth of the sleeping cave. Mercurial was snoring softly in his silk hammock, his tail flopping out over the side. Cliff was sleeping on a big red pillow, snoring so loudly Peacemaker wondered how anyone else managed to sleep through it. Hourglass was out sleeping in the main section of the Winglet - they were flopped across a large cushion the color of sunshine and raindrops. Firefly, Glace, and the remaining members of the Winglet were in a separate sleeping cave across the room.

Peacemaker finally closed his eyes, and they stayed closed.

"Your dragonet is getting out of talon, Darkstalker."

Tears. Silver. Copper. Moons.

"I have no control over myself at the moment. But give it time."

Claws. Teeth. Fire. Blood.

*"*Time *is the one thing we* don't *have. Especially if what Smolder says is true."*

Rainbows. Sunflowers. Strawberries. Sleep.

"I still don't trust him fully. Blister and Morrowseer, as much as I hate the both of them, will gladly fill any roles he leaves behind."

Ice. Wind. Daggers. Black.

Peacemaker was falling.

No, no, not falling. Dragged. Dragged down, down, into a darkness he didn't comprehend. Through strawberries - too many for him to count, and the further down they went, the more red they became. Still, he was going down.

Into nightmares. Into... memories?

"What, did you think I'd taste a strawberry and decide, mmm, wow, that's worth giving up my magic for?"

Dreams, memories, nightmares... Peacemaker, have you ever, really, understood the difference?

"No," he tried to say, but instead he opened his mouth and a cool, coppery taste flooded his senses. Blood. Peacemaker screamed.

Cherries. White. Snow. Nothingness.

"Don't be mad at me for things I might do one day, all right? I'm not evil now. I haven't done any of that. And I probably won't. Will you focus on that, please? Stay in the present with me?"

Screams.

A/N: lol that took a turn for the *dark*
Anyways, you were all begging for an update, so here you are!]
Undertow is nonbinary, but they are considering the male gender, which is why they're in the sleeping cave with the other male members of the Winglet. And yes, Underbake is

canon and you can fight me if you like.
Also also also or however many alsos we've gone through so far, finally back to those nightmares Jade Mountain was heralding! And a strangely familiar quote, wow, aren't I just some sort of literary geneeuoose
We covered a lot of stuff in this chapter! But not all the stuff!
So get ready for *more stuff!*
See ya' in the next chapter,

- A totally sane RainWing-NightWing hybrid

Chapter Eleven (AF)

Firefly shook Peacemaker awake.

"Oh my gosh are you okay?" she yelped, her eyes wide.

"Sure," Peacemaker replied, rubbing his head. "I feel kind of weird, though..."

Suddenly the room began to stretch. The walls and floor sort of melted together and turned eye-burning colors, and Peacemaker had to close his eyes to stop them from watering.

"Darkstalker. Darkstalker, for the love of the moons, wake up!"

"What?" the dragon sat up, rubbing his eyes. A strange NightWing who felt weirdly familiar was giving him a worried look. "Where's Firefly?"

"Who?" she asked, her brow furrowed.

"The princess of the NightWings and RainWings! She was right-" he stopped abruptly.

Uh. This necklace is so gaudy. This is absolutely ludicrous.

It wasn't the voice he had been hearing before - the sort of dark one that he'd heard in his nightmare last night. It was just a normal mind - some NightWing worrying that she'd chosen the wrong necklace to wear today. But that was impossible-

Was he reading minds?

"Who are you?" he demanded suddenly, sitting up. The NightWing flinched back, shock written across her face.

"Darkstalker, are you okay?" she asked. "I- It's me, Clearsight."

This hit like a mountain crumbling down on top of him.

Darkstalker the animus? No, I-

He looked at his talons. They weren't the small, delicate claws that he was supposed to have, with the little sparkles of color underneath the scales. They were powerful, rigid claws, and they seemed to tingle slightly with magic.

He looked up at the dragon - *Clearsight.* She was the most beautiful dragon in the world, but at the same time he had never met her; she was just a story from Pantala.

Darkstalker - or whatever the dragon's name was - felt his wings start to shiver.

"Who am I?" he whispered hoarsely, covering his face with his talons.

Suddenly they were wet.

He pulled back, startled, only to find that he was in a completely different place.

He was on a stage. Hundreds of horrified eyes were locked on him, and Clearsight was no where to be found. He looked down at his talons to see that they were covered in blue blood, which was pooling out of a dead IceWing laying lifelessly in the center of the stage.

The dragon recoiled, horrified and yet... pleased with himself, somehow? How was that possible?

Memories of years of abuse and tears and pain flashed through his mind, but he couldn't unravel or figure them out before they

disappeared again.

He backed off the stage and broke into a run, leaving sticky blue talonprints behind him.

The world once again blurred, and then he was standing before a small group of dragons; dragons he *knew,* but they were younger now. Moonwatcher, Winter, Peril, Turtle, Qibli, all staring up at him in wide-eyed fear.

As he collapsed under the weight of new memories pounding his brain, the ground shook. Suddenly he heard a voice.

"Bruh. You should've just eaten the shoelace."

A/N: Thank you all so much for reading Stalker of Dreams! I'm so glad you've made it all the way to the end, and I hope to see you again soon in my next fanfiction sometime soon. Until next time,

- Galaxy

***REAL* A/N: Yeah, well, as you guessed, this isn't the real Chapter Eleven. Happy April Fools everyone! I wanted to do something for today, and my brain ran out of ideas. So here it is!! The story isn't even *close* to being finished, so don't worry. I hope to see you in the next chapter, and until next time!**

- Gala, who has zero sense of humor

Chapter Eleven

Peacemaker wasn't in it the next day.

He had woken up, screaming, to Bake shaking him roughly from his nightmares.

He barely remembered any of the classes he went to, and his main memory of the first official day of school at Jade Mountain Academy was Firefly nudging him awake in the middle of a class to gawp at a pair of teachers who were constantly smiling and winking at each other.

Then he'd run into Moonwatcher on her way out, and she'd given him a weird look he didn't have the energy to decipher, and finally it was a long break in between classes and he collapsed into his leaf pile.

He didn't know how long it was later when Bumblebee walked in. She had Cherry with her, and the two Pantalans were talking to each other.

"I'll wake him up."

Bumblebee shook her clawmate, and he let out a frustrate growl.

"Leave me aloooneee, Bumblebeeee," he mumbled, batting at her talons. "I want to sleeeeeppp."

"You've *been* sleeping, Peacemaker!" Bumblebee replied, shaking the dragonet harder. "*All day,* actually, and we'd both like it if you woke up!"

"I didn't sleep well last night," complained Peacemaker. "And Moooon was giving me the *look*."

"The *look?*" Bumblebee sighed, and hauled Peacemaker out of his leaf pile. She was stronger than she looked. "What are you talking

about?"

"The look she always gives me when she thinks I'm not paying attention to her face," Peacemaker moaned, standing up on the cold stone floor of the sleeping cave. "Except *thiis time,* she didn't even *try* to hide it! And it's..." He trailed off, not actually sure how to end that statement.

"Well, come on," Bumblebee said firmly. "The teachers are going nuts. The Copper, Quartz, and Amber Winglets are supposed to go to the library for some 'surprise announcement'." She murmured something else under her breath that Peacemaker didn't catch.

"Alright, alright, fine, I'm coming," Peacemaker sighed, shaking out his wings.

"Reading monkeys," Cherry laughed. Bumblebee sighed and hurried out of the cave with the other two dragonets close behind her.

There were way too many dragons in the library.

Peacemaker found Firefly in the crowd and awkwardly made his way over to her, stepping over claws and tails and hearing at least three dragonets whisper "watch it!" at him sharply.

"What's going on?" he asked her, and she shrugged, her golden-orange wings rippling like curtains.

"Hey, wait a minute," said a dragon next to them, an IceWing with a metallic sheen to his scales. It was the same dragon from the underground river yesterday, Basilisk, which meant that...

Theory was here too.

Suddenly alert, Peacemaker set up and whirled around, trying to spot the black-and-yellow HiveWing. He was sitting next to Bumblebee, and the two were talking to each other quietly, but Peacemaker couldn't hear what they were saying. Duskclaws, the NightWing from the Amber Winglet, shot him a look. The silver teardrop scale next to his eye shimmered in the greenish light of the library.

Peacemaker tried to relax. Bumblebee and Theory had been friends forever - the same way he and Firefly were friends, even. But Peacemaker wasn't sure it was that which was rubbing him the wrong way about the HiveWing dragonet with stupid copper spectacles.

"Quit sitting on my tail!" hissed a voice. An IceWing, presumably the one from the Copper Winglet, was growling quietly at an almost completely-black HiveWing. He hissed right back at her, and suddenly a ball of pale purple scales was barreling into Peacemaker.

"Ah!" he let out a sharp yelp, before realizing it was Flashsight.

"They're *insane,*" she whispered loudly. "Charcoal and Bleak. They fight constantly. I can't believe someone chose to put them into the same Winglet. No, I can't believe someone thought it would be a good idea to put *me* into their Winglet, too."

"Calm down," Peacemaker replied, pushing the NightWing dragonet off of him. "It can't be that terrible."

"I didn't sleep at all last night," Flashsight argued.

"Neither did I, and the IceWing and HiveWing in my Winglet get along just fine," Peacemaker replied reasonably.

"Shush, the both of you," Glace snarled at the pair of NightWings. "Basilisk was saying something."

"Oh," said Peacemaker. "Sorry." That was interesting. Even though Basilisk wasn't a part of the main IceWing tribe (at least from what Peacemaker had seen - the IceWing *was* from Possibility, right?), Glace still didn't seem to want to slice his face off. Maybe she just held a grudge against NightWings.

"Um, the IceWing in the front of the room," Basilisk said awkwardly, shifting his wings with a soft metallic *twang,* "that's Ex-Prince Winter from Sanctuary. The pale orange dragon's also from there, but I forget his name. I know because Possibility and Sanctuary visit each other quite often. We have similar goals."

"Ooh," Firefly said dramatically, leaning on Peacemaker. "A *prince*."

"An ex-prince," Flashsight corrected her. The purple NightWing sat down, lashing her tail slightly.

"Attention students!" called a voice. All the heads in the room snapped up as Sunny stepped to the front of the library, spreading her golden wings to address the gathered dragonets. "We have some exciting news to announce!" Behind her, the pale orange SkyWing snorted, and the NightWing-RainWing dragonet swore that he saw something sitting on the dragon's shoulder.

Sky, Peacemaker realized with a start. *The dragon from the library.*

"You've all probably been wondering what the special curriculum for this year is," Sunny continued, folding her wings back in against her sides. A HiveWing with inkblot shapes splattered across her scales hurried in, adjusting her glasses frantically.

"Sorry," she whispered to the dragonets, and Peacemaker heard a couple of giggles.

Sunny waited for the Winglets to settle down again before continuing. "As many of you may have guessed by seeing these three dragons behind me," she said, stepping back to allow Winter, Sky, and Cricket to smile and wave at everyone, "this year, we will be learned about scaven-"

"*Humans,*" corrected a voice. Peacemaker jumped, startled.

"Did you hear that?" whispered Firefly. "It sounded like Dragon, but kinda... squeaky."

"I *heard that,*" said the voice.

"Ah!" Peacemaker yelped, jumping back and crashing into Basilisk.

"Careful," the IceWing said, hopping backwards a step.

Standing on the floor in front of them, with its small paws on its hips, was a human. It glared up at them with a fierce expression, and the long hair on its head fell to its shoulders.

"Are you calling my accent *squeaky?*" the human demanded, and finally Peacemaker realized it was Wren, one of Sky's friends.

"A little bit?" Firefly offered, shrinking back a step.

"Wren!" Sky yelped. "You're not supposed to be scaring everyone yet!" The pale orange dragon fumbled through the crowd and scooped her up. On his shoulder, a second human - most likely Ivy - started squeaking furiously at Wren. She squeaked back as Peacemaker, Firefly, Flashsight, and Basilisk watched with bemused expressions.

"Can you two please stop arguing," sighed Sky, rubbing his temples.

"It's not Wren's fault that her hair is messy today!" Cricket added from her place next to Sunny, who looked just as startled as Peacemaker felt.

"It's unnatural to be expected to keep your hair perfect and neat all the time when you're literally living under a rock full of dragons who don't know what combs are," Wren agreed, switched back to the Dragon language.

"What does this have to do with scaring the dragonets?" Winter herded Sky back to the front of the room with his silvery-blue wings. "Let's just get back on-topic, shall we?"

"Sure thing," Cricket replied.

This continued for a few hours longer, with Sunny explaining when each Winglet would be learning with Cricket, Sky, Winter, and the humans, and then Winter giving a lecture about how he'd always wanted to study humans and their behavior, then Cricket jumping in with her fascination in "reading monkeys", and finally Sky finished with telling the gathered dragonets about how he'd met the other two dragons. Then Moonwatcher had shown up to talk with the "Holy Trinity of Human Knowledge", and the Winglets dispersed back to their usual daily activities.

"Huh," Firefly said as they were walking out. "I never knew this year was going to be so chaotic."

"Neither did I," Peacemaker replied.

Neither did I. Which is really the surprising part.

A/N: AAaaand here's the *real* Chapter Eleven! Sorry for tricking all of you, I just couldn't help myself and I had nothing better to do for April Fools (plus Wren was being really weird about it because she and the human Wren don't get a long very well). I also told you we'd be seeing more of Flashsight and Basilisk, and look, I was right!
The bickering IceWing and HiveWing were Bleak and Charcoal from the Silver Winglet, I think we'll be hearing from them again at some point. Either way, this is Galaxy, signing out until the next chapter!

Chapter Twelve

Perhaps it was just Peacemaker's opinion, but Jade Mountain Academy became much more interesting... and *chaotic* when the scavengers began to walk around the school just as commonly as the students.

One morning he'd woken up to Ivy (at least, the one he thought was Ivy) sitting next to him and making little awestruck noises at his scales.

"Ah!" he'd yelped and sat up in a hurry.

"AGH!" Ivy had backed away in terror, crawling halfway up the wall.

"Oh, three moons, I'm sorry," Peacemaker took a deep breath, trying to get his thoughts straight. *Talking to a human. This is fine. It's not like anything's on fire.* "You nearly gave me a heart attack."

"I-it's... whoa..." Ivy trailed off, looking up at him. He actually wasn't all that much bigger than her - but she was still small enough that he could probably carry her around. Ivy said some things in her language before switching over into Dragon. "You have *very* pretty scales, Mr. Dragon, Sir."

"Name's Peacemaker," he offered with a shrug, thoughts still racing in circles through his brain. *Why would* I *be more interesting than Firefly? Or really anyone in my Winglet, for that matter...* he thought about Undertow's almost unnaturally blue scales, and Bake's auburn orange. "You're Ivy, right? I still can't really tell the difference between you and Wren."

"I'm Ivy," she nodded with the human equivalent of a smile, completely unfazed by his blunt way of stating that all humans looked the same. "Peacecreator is a cool name. Not that Sky isn't a wonderful name, but yours is a lot more... complex."

"Peacemaker," he corrected.

"That's what I said," she grinned. "So, what type of dragon are you again?"

Peacemaker was slightly taken aback, before realizing that Ivy probably didn't know all that much about hybrids. Or that much about dragons at all, really - he almost wanted to ask.

"I'm a NightWing-RainWing," he replied. "So is my friend Firefly. And her brother Lightseeker. And a few other dragons from the Rainforest."

"Oh, wow," Ivy's eyes lit up. "That is... really cool."

Peacemaker had never received praise from a scaven- human before, but he was humbled. "Thanks."

"What type of dragon is the one who talks funny?" Ivy continued, starting to pace. "I tried to ask her, but she said something about... frosted flakes? Might've been lost in translation," she sighed.

"You mean Cherry? She's a LeafWing, but has really unique scales."

"Yep, that's probably her! She called me a 'reading monkey'. I mean, I guess we kinda look like monkeys, but it was still really weird."

Weirder than this conversation? Peacemaker wondered.

There are a lot of things weirder than this conversation. That is not one of them.

No one asked you.

"Well, urm... I better get to class," Peacemaker scooted around her. "I'll talk to you later, maybe."

"See ya!" Ivy seemed completely oblivious to his awkward, nonspecific excuse.

Worse than Fathom. I swear...

Peacemaker jumped, and glanced around.

Who are you?! he demanded in his head. *I'm really starting to get sick of your vague comments on random topics. If you want to be part of the conversation, tell me who you are and why you're doing this to me! If not,* ***leave me alone!!***

Ha! You wouldn't be able to handle the truth. And with that, the voice went quiet. There went *that* entire argument.

Peacemaker found Firefly chatting amiably with Bake and Undertow.

"Oh, hey Peacemaker!" she called, waving a wing at him. "Undertow was just talking about the time when they found a really cool pearl and decided to make it into a bracelet. Look at how cool it is!" She motioned for the SeaWing to hold up their talon.

"Oh - cool," Peacemaker was stunned by the bright red pearl. It would've clashed terribly with Undertow's scales, except for the fact that it didn't.

"Ironically enough, on my way back to show my parents," Undertow continued with a chuckle, "I was caught in a really powerful rip current that hadn't been there on my way out. When I surfaced, there was a huge storm, and I flew through it all the way back to the Deep Palace. Totally worth it, though."

"I wish I had as harrowing a tale to tell," Bake laughed. "I guess there was this one time when Amber sat on top of me."

Firefly barked a laugh, and Peacemaker nodded somewhat nervously.

A scream cut through his ears, and everyone in the hallway froze.

"Um," Undertow glanced around, "what was *that*?"

"Let's go find out!" Firefly declared, jumping into action. "Come on, guys!"

Don't.

"I-I'm really not sure if that's a g-" he stammered.

But Undertow and Bake were already peeling after her, and, *three moons,* he couldn't believe he was doing this.

Peacemaker spread his wings and dashed after them, his brain screaming all the ways this was a terrible, terrible idea. The voice was silent, however, seemingly resigned to witness whatever fate was soon to befall him.

"Oh!" was Firefly's startled voice. As he approached, he realized her scales were pale green with stripes of violent neon. "Oh... *no*..."

Peacemaker stopped breathing. He was pretty sure his heart lurched and skipped a few too many beats.

"What... *happened?*"

Laying before them, it's throat violently ripped out and a pool of sickening, dark red blood forming around it, was the body of a dragonet. They were a pale orange SandWing with stripes of brown and white in their wings as their only distinguishing feature - *something* had slashed talonmarks across their face, leaving it nothing but a bloody, unidentifiable mess.

This got dark fast, the voice observed.

Firefly backed away, her eyes wide. Undertow stood in shock, and Bake in horrified confusion.

"I'll go get - someone," Bake turned and sprinted off down the hallway, barreling through the crowd that was starting to gather around the body. Worried murmurs rippled through the dragonets.

"EVERYONE!" Moonwatcher spread her star-speckled wings. "Please let me through, thank you," she stepped through the crowd, her expression reserved even though her eyes were just as frantic as the dragonets around her.

"Oh, dear."

This was such an understatement that Peacemaker almost felt the

urge to laugh. But he bit his tongue and waited for Bake to come back.

"CEDAR!" a pair of dragonets rushed forward, tears streaming down their faces. One was a SeaWing-SandWing hybrid, tail twitching. The other was another pale green RainWing, who had the same silent horror on his face as Firefly did.

"What happened to her?" the RainWing asked, a flush of red escaping into his ruff. "Who *did* this?"

"S-she was our *clawmate,*" the SeaWing-SandWing whispered hoarsely.

"Drizzle, Kiwi, go and find Professor Cricket," Moon instructed, her voice firm, but wavering at the end. As the pair nodded and turned to head off, Sunny and Tsunami entered the scene.

"Oh *no,*" Tsunami groaned, trying to seem exasperated even as fear leaked into her tone. "Not again. Please, please don't let us have a repeat of the first year."

Sunny clapped her talons over her mouth in shock.

"I- three *moons.*"

"Do we know who did this?" Tsunami hissed.

"No," Moonwatcher replied. "But no one here killed him." She waved a wing at the gathered dragonets.

"Peacemaker..." Firefly edged closer to her friend, her voice barely a whisper.

"L-let's get out of here," he agreed. "Come on." The dragonet nodded at Undertow, who shook their head.

"I'll wait for Bake."

Peacemaker turned around to leave, feeling Firefly's weight against his side.

"Let's find the rest of the Winglet, okay?" he said. "Mercurial and Cherry and the others. Undertow and Bake will catch up." She nodded weakly in response, which was so un-Firefly-like that he closed his eyes and took a deep breath to keep going.

"Did you hear about the-?" Mercurial abruptly stopped as he saw Firefly's green scales. "Oh."

"The plants bleed out and sands turn red," Cherry whispered. "The darkness follows and spiders aren't dead."

"Will she be okay?" Bumblebee rushed to her friend's side.

"I hope so. She's never been..." Peacemaker didn't finish his sentence as Glace stalked in, glaring daggers.

"I have three guesses as to how this happened and they all begin with the letter 'D'," she snarled. "Stupid, lying NightWings, said he was gone."

Oh. Hah! The IceWing really thinks that? the voice barked a laugh, and Peacemaker winced. ***Oh, moons, no. This is something else entirely.***

You know who did this? Peacemaker wondered, but of course there was no response.

Before anyone else could say anything, a dragon walked into the room, her pale green scales dotted with oval shapes like the shadows of leaves. Behind the LeafWing stood Undertow, Bake, and another darker dragon with flecks of gold on her talons, wings, and snout.

"Peacemaker," Willow asked, "can we talk with you for a moment?"

A/N: AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH I'M SO, SO SORRY FOR NOT UPDATING MORE!! I have no good excuse, so I hope you can accept my apology and this chapter.
Peacemaker has a conversation with a scavenger, but wait, it gets better because "Oh no, someone died!" Haha, I have too much fun murdering dragonets. Looks like Tsunami is finally getting tired of this sh*t and Firefly is traumatized!

Drizzle and Kiwi are cameos!
The next chapter will be another exciting one, just you wait...
See you (hopefully) next week or sooner!

- Galaxy

Chapter Thirteen

"What do you need to talk to *Peacemaker* about?" Firefly asked weakly, lifting her head to fix her eyes on Willow and Sundew. Her scales dripped with acidic green and clusters of white, like some kind of fungus growing over her scales. Peacemaker felt her brush her wing against his. "Do you think he has something to do with this?"

The LeafWings exchanged glances.

"Not exactly," Willow replied uncertainly before Sundew could open her mouth. "We just need a few minutes to talk to him."

"It's fine," Peacemaker said, a little too fast. *Why are my talons shaking?* "I'll be back in a few minutes. Stay with Bumblebee."

Firefly sat down, frowning deeply. Peacemaker wanted to wish her bad mood away, wanted to make sure she'd never be sad like this again. Instead, he followed the LeafWings outside of the cave, tail lashing back and forth. "Yeah, what's up?" He stole a glance at Bake and Undertow, but the two didn't say anything.

"We're not saying you did it-" Willow began, but before she could finish Sundew piped up.

"-But we kind of are. You're on our pretty *narrow* list of suspects for who did this. You weren't with Firefly this morning, and pretty much the moment you showed up, the body was found." She narrowed her eyes, and Peacemaker shrunk back, holding up his talons.

"I-I would *never!*" Realizing how suspicious that sounded, he added quickly, "I-I was talking to Ivy this morning, you could ask her or- or have any mindreader look in my head. I swear on the *moons,* I'd never hurt *anyone.*"

The two exchanged glances.

"I'll check with Ivy," Willow offered. She turned her attention back to Peacemaker. "I'm sorry about all of this, but we *are* going to have to keep an eye on you until we find the killer."

Peacemaker nodded numbly, swallowing the lump in his throat. *But I* didn't, he wanted to protest. *I didn't even* know *Cedar, what kind of motivation would I have?*

"Oh!" He snapped his claws, flaring his wings. The dragonet quickly realized his mistake at everyone's expressions and withdrew them after a moment, though. "I *couldn't* have done it. We all heard the scream from down the hall. And I'm not an animus, I can't kill dragons without touching them." He spread his talons innocently.

There was a pause, and Peacemaker resisted the urge to glare at the other dragons. They all had that look, like they knew something he didn't and were hiding it from him. Why did *everyone* have to hide things from him?

They've actually got some pretty good reasons.

"Go back inside," Sundew said after a few heartbeats. "We're keeping everyone in dorms until the head of school makes a decision about what to do about this."

And that was it.

That's it?

Peacemaker barely felt like he was in control of his talons as he walked back into the cave, Undertow and Bake right behind him. The moment the LeafWings were out of earshot, he turned around, teeth bared slightly.

"Did you really have to do that?"

Undertow made a sympathetic face. "We couldn't be sure. I'm sorry, dude."

"The hourglass is broken," Cherry held up a talon hopelessly. "The

sand's spilling out, I can't pick apart the black and white anymore."

Peacemaker turned his attention to Glace, and immediately away from her again at the IceWing's expression. Naturally, she would be more than happy to believe he was the murderer. He glanced in Bumblebee and Firefly's direction, but the HiveWing was too busy trying to comfort the hybrid to really take notice. Mercurial fixed him with a pained expression, talons fidgeting nervously like he wasn't sure what to do or where to go.

"GUYS!" Cliff and Hourglass burst into the room, both with their wings flared. "SOMEONE JUST GOT-"

"We already know," the silver SilkWing offered quietly, motioning to the distressed dragonets littered around the Quartz Winglet cave.

Cliff's posture settled and Hourglass put a talon to the side of their snout, wincing. "Oh."

"Tsunami's decided that they're going to start sending everyone home," the SandWing royal said after a few moments. "The last time students started getting murdered at Jade Mountain, it didn't stop. They're going to sort things out, but until then, school's probably off for the rest of the year."

"That can't be a good idea," Glace hissed suddenly. "They'd be letting the murderer get away with it."

Mmm, not exactly.

Was it not one of the students?! Peacemaker mentally yelped.

...No. It was not.

"That's... a good point, actually," Mercurial acknowledged. "Someone should let her know."

"Undertow's mom knows what she's doing," Bake lashed his tail, leaning a little closer to the SeaWing. "If all the heads of the school are in agreement, then that's the best course of action."

The members of the Quartz Winglet continued discussing it, talking back and forth about possible suspects, until Firefly spread her wings and coughed. All heads turned in her direction.

"We should find the murderer. Before the school closes."

This was met with uproar.

"We'll *definitely* get killed," Bake whispered.

"It's not safe," Mercurial agreed.

"That is a *STUPID* idea," Glace growled.

"If something happened to you, I'd lose my mind," Peacemaker nodded. "Firefly, your 'plans' almost always involve jumping into things *without* a plan. Looking for whoever-" *or whatever*- "did this is a *really bad idea.* Especially if we don't have a solid plan B if things go wrong. Do we even know what we'll do if we find the killer?"

Silence fell for a few moments, everyone thinking their own thoughts.

"Well, we know none of us did it." And there was Cliff, talking slowly as if thinking over each word carefully. "If we stick together, I mean... ten dragonets could take one adult any day. *Especially* us. We've got enough fire and claws and venom and whatever to take somebody out, at least long enough to call for help."

"Peacemaker's a suspect," Glace said suddenly, and Peacemaker glared at her. "A pair of LeafWings took him outside to interrogate him."

"I'm innocent," Peacemaker protested at the same time Bumblebee and Firefly yelped "He wouldn't!" and "He's innocent!" in tandem.

"What do you even *have* against NightWings, anyways?" Bake ventured, surprisingly enough.

"Didn't you and your friend rat him out?" Glace snapped back.

"We had to be sure," Undertow argued. "But I don't really- it doesn't

matter. Even if it was him, he still couldn't take us. And yeah, Bake has a point. You've done nothing but growl at every NightWing student you've met so far. Why'd you even come to Jade Mountain if you're not going to be accepting of other tribes?"

"They were absolute *jerks* to the RainWings, does no one remember that?" the IceWing retorted. "And Darkstalker-"

"Is *gone,*" interrupted Mercurial, spreading his wings. "And he basically mind controlled them."

"As for what happened with the RainWings," Firefly added, "Queen Glory's been keeping them in line, and even the worst of them have been making up for their mistakes. They were just desperate for a home."

"Why are you all ganging up on *me,*" Glace grumbled, sinking into herself a little bit. "*Peacemaker's* the one accused of murder here." She laughed a little at that. "Actually, what is *with* your name? I know NightWings are kind of prissy, but *Peacemaker?* It's a mouthful."

"It was made with hope," Cherry flicked her tail.

"Lay *off,* Glace," Hourglass warned. "And where were *you* when Cedar was being murdered?"

"I was in the Prey Center with a couple dragons from the Amber Winglet," the IceWing bared her teeth. "Ask Dolphin and Porcupine. Where were *you?*"

"With Cliff," Hourglass replied coolly, sitting down and coiling up their deadly tail behind them.

"And I've been in here with Cherry," Mercurial nodded. "Listen, you guys. It *wasn't* any of us. Turning on each other won't do anyone any good. That means *stop* fighting with Glace, and *stop* accusing Peacemaker."

"Okay," Glace sighed, defeated.

The rest of the Winglet muttered a few words of agreement as well.

"Then we're settled," the SilkWing decided. "So, what's the plan?"

"The best course of action is probably to visit each Winglet and question as many of the other students as we can. We've only got a few days before everyone's parents start arriving and dragonets will start being sent home. And we shouldn't let the adults know- they'll try to stop us for sure." Undertow glanced around at the bemused stares from their clawmates. "What? Tsunami and Riptide are my *parents,* guys. The rebellious streak runs in the family."

"Splitting up, there'll still be five of us in each group," Hourglass pitched in. "We'd still be a match for any student that tried to make a run for it."

"Firefly, Bumblebee, Peacemaker, Cherry and I can go across the Great Hall and talk to the students in the Stalactite Corridor," Cliff waved a wing in the aforementioned dragons' direction. "Everyone else, ask around the Winglets here."

"Sounds good to me," Bake gave a mock salute and Undertow playfully whacked him with their wing.

As long as Glace and I aren't stuck in a group together, I'm happy with this plan, Peacemaker thought.

"Alright, good luck, everyone," Hourglass nodded. "Don't get brutally murdered!"

"You, too," Bumblebee buzzed her wings and moved to follow Cliff out of the cave.

You already know that the killer wasn't any of the students. Why don't you speak up?

Because if I did, it'd be suspicious. And they're all already a little worried about me. I don't need that.

Cliff specifically picked this group out because they're all the least likely to turn on you. These are your allies, Peacemaker, I assure you. They trust you.

It's easier to gather clues if I don't say anything. Besides, how would I

respond if I told them I knew? "Oh, a voice in my head said so." Do you know how that sounds?

You're the second NightWing born in the rainforest I know of who's had the aid of a mysterious voice in their head to solve a murder at Jade Mountain, the voice hummed. ***Which isn't necessarily a lot, I'll admit, but it is an oddly specific set of circumstances.***

Peacemaker ignored the voice's ramblings in favor of nudging Firefly with his wing.

"Hey, you holding up alright?"

"As well as anyone," the RainWing hybrid replied, but the droop in her wings and dullness of her scales said otherwise. Peacemaker didn't pry into it; Firefly was... a lot more sensitive to things like that than he was. He still wished he could make her feel better somehow.

"We'll find out what did this," he promised.

"I know. We're like a mystery-solving duo. I know some things and you know some things, and together we know everything."

Peacemaker laughed a little at this callback to a few days ago, and whorls of yellow blossomed across Firefly's scales, which was all he could ask for.

"I haven't been down this hallway before," she observed quietly after a moment, touching a talon to the slightly-crinkled paper hung on one of the walls of the tunnel. It depicted a pair of dragons - one gold and blue and one purple and black - with their tails entwined, a rainbow behind them. "These are some of the previous students' works, aren't they?"

Peacemaker read the writing at the bottom: *W and G forever.*

"Yep," Bumblebee said. "Those two were *smitten* for each other."

"Awww," Cliff cooed.

"They would've killed for each other, for sure," Cherry stifled a

giggle, as though she'd made a joke only she understood.

"Alright, Silver Winglet, here we go!" Cliff flapped his wings a few times to get everyone's attention, then ducked inside.

Immediately upon entering, a teal-and-green ball of scales hurtled into Cliff. He fell over with an *oof*.

"CLIFF! Hi! You're not murderified!"

"Neither are you! Hi, Auklet." He stuck his tongue out at the SeaWing princess and pushed the slightly smaller dragon off, and Peacemaker watched as she quickly collected herself, folding her wings back and sitting down.

"Didn't you get the message from the teachers?" an icey-looking SilkWing (probably SilkWing-IceWing hybrid, then) asked, shuffling her wings a little uncomfortably. Peacemaker scoured his brain, trying to remember the Winglet listings. This was... Greta, right? "We're not supposed to leave our dorms until our parents come to pick us up."

"Oh, we're ignoring them," Bumblebee supplied helpfully. "We're going to find the killer ourselves, before they leave and get away with it."

"That seems... fraught with peril," a RainWing (Clover?) crinkled up her nose, which proceeded to turn a dark purple color. "No offense to Peril the self-defense coach, of course."

"That's what we thought, but we're making it work," Peacemaker shrugged.

"Sounds awesome," a HiveWing held out her talon, and Cliff shook it. "I'm Max. Here's the thing- none of us did it. We were learning how to fight off a firescales in the self-defense cave earlier today."

Greta nodded. "The best thing to do is try to get them in the water so you don't get burnt. Smoke was surprisingly good at it! Peril was *super* impressed." She waved a wing in the aforementioned dragon's direction. Smoke, a dark grey-purple dragon, snorted.

"If you don't wanna get burnt, use a rock. That's how we did it on the volcano."

"Point is," Clover chimed again, "we were nowhere near the place of the murder when it happened."

"Thanks for checking in, though," Auklet booped Cliff on the nose, laughing. "Stay safe."

"You, too," the SkyWing prince grinned back.

Oh. Wait. Peacemaker turned to look at Auklet, and the slightly older dragon met his eyes. *Auklet.* As in, the dragon he'd heard mentioned in his nightmare a few days ago.

"Peacemaker, c'mon," Bumblebee lightly shook him, and the ebony dragonet shook his head. Right. More important things to deal with. He'd come back to this later.

Cliff was already chatting up a storm with the Opal Winglet dragonets, and Firefly had started to open up again a little, too.

"I was in the library with a few dragons from the Gold Winglet," an IceWing was saying. "Athyrium, Charm, Soulkeeper, and the SandWing-MudWing with the long name too."

"And me," a RainWing butted in. "My name is literally 'Outrageous,' how do you keep forgetting that I exist?" He waved his wings up and down a few times, emerald displeasure and orange annoyance floating through them.

"There were a *lot* of dragons in the library, Wolf," the LeafWing said wryly, tipping her snout at the first dragon who had spoken. "For example, pretty much the entire Amber Winglet was there, besides the HiveWing, SeaWing, and SandWing."

"Glace mentioned she was with Dolphin and Porcupine in the Prey Center," Bumblebee chirped.

Theory doesn't have an alibi? Peacemaker almost got excited, then mentally slapped himself because one, his dislike of the HiveWing dragonet was entirely unfounded and two, none of the dragonets at

the academy had actually killed Cedar.

"This is going nowhere," Cliff grumbled as they left the cave. "Everyone was with at least one other dragon when the murder took place."

"Maybe it was a group effort," Bumblebee tried.

"Maybe it was an animus?" Firefly asked.

"Maybe it was woven in the rock," Cherry made a face, and everyone fell silent to look at her.

"Maybe... maybe we should ask Stonemover," Peacemaker said.

A/N: Guess who isn't dead!!! As in, I have never been dead. As in, I have been on Discord and Tumblr and Archive of Our Own, just not here. As in, you could've literally messaged me on any of those and gotten an answer and some of you actually tried that, but YEAH. GUESS WHO DECIDED TO TRY AND FINISH THIS.
We will see how well that goes! I dropped this story for *TWO ENTIRE YEARS* (which is a LOT) and I barely remember where I was going with the plot, but! It's kinda-sorta starting to come back to me, a little bit? Funnily enough, it was actually Cherry's poem about spiders from chapter twelve that helped jog my memory a ton!
Lots of speaking cameos in this chapter! Twelve year-old me was not big brained enough to actually write down who any of the characters belong to, which is REALLY annoying, but Greta, Clover, Wolf, Athyrium, Charm, Soulkeeper, Mountain Sands, Outrageous, and Brugmansia are *all* OCs!! They do not belong to me!!!! Sorry to their owners that it took so long for them to show up in the story,,y'know how executive dysfunction can be.
I've been quite busy while I was away, which is the easier way of saying I'm genderfluid and diagnosed with ADHD and I also have a boyfriend now. But I did miss you guys, and I missed this story! Hopefully I'll have enough motivation to at least get another few chapters out before I disappear into the tightened bowels of the internet again, so until then, allons-y!

- Mythic (or, as you all know me, Gala ;])

P.S. I've changed up a few things in previous chapters, ex: Hourglass is Thorn and Smolder's dragonet now, Blob doesn't exist anymore, Cliff and Auklet *do* exist, etc. etc. so maybe go back and reread SoD, not just to refresh your memory, but also to see what's changed. Without further ado, I wish y'all a great rest of your week! And remember: NEVER SAY "Y'ALL," Y'ALL!! :D

whoa another update chapter ?? IT'S BEEN MORE THAN A YEAR.

howdy hey guess who's back at it AGAIN. (me. it's me. three moons.) SoD is actually getting a huge overhaul -new characters !! slightly new plot !!!! better writing !!!!!! no weird age discrepancies because those were WEIRD !!!!!!!!!! (sorry, I always get really excited in author's notes for some reason) - and it's over on Ao3, if you wanna read it ! link's at the bottom of the page - hopefully I'll see you there ? maybe ?

sorry this is kind of a short thing just wanted to let folks know that the fic isn't completely dead, WE'RE PERFORMING NECROMANCY, IT'S OKAY GUYS IT'S GONNA BE OKAY

- Mythic

another update chapter!

friendly reminder to readers, Stalker of Dreams is no longer being updated on Wattpad, but IS in progress on Ao3 ! find me at Mythic_And_Co and just check the fics I've written under WoF, it's there, I promise.

hope to see you there! as always, never say y'all, y'all, and have a swagtastic day B)

- Mythic